TRANSLATION

Susan Bassnett

the NEW CRITICAL IDIOM

TRANSLATION

In a time when millions travel around the planet, some by choice, some driven by economic or political exile, translation of the written and spoken word is of ever increasing importance. This guide presents readers with an accessible and engaging introduction to the valuable position translation holds within literature and society.

Leading translation theorist Susan Bassnett traces the history of translation, examining the ways translation is currently utilised as a burgeoning interdisciplinary activity and considers more recent research into developing technologies and new media forms.

Translation displays the importance of translation across disciplines, and is essential reading for students and scholars of translation, literary studies, globalisation studies, and ancient and modern languages.

Susan Bassnett is Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Warwick. She has published extensively on translation, and her best known books include *Translation Studies* (4th ed, 2013); *Reflections on Translation* (2011); *Constructing Cultures*, written with Andre Lefevere (1996) and *Post-Colonial Translation*, co-edited with Harish Trivedi (1999). She translates from several languages and lectures on aspects of translation all over the world.

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THE NEW CRITICAL IDIOM

SERIES EDITOR: JOHN DRAKAKIS, UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING

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- offers an original and distinctive overview by a leading literary and cultural critic;
- relates the term to the larger field of cultural representation.

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TRANSLATION

Susan Bassnett

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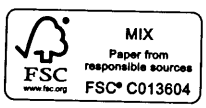

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For Alexander, Charlie and Beatrix, translators of the future.

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Series Editor's Preface

The New Critical Idiom is a series of introductory books that seeks to extend the lexicon of literary terms, in order to address the radical changes that have taken place in the study of literature during the last decades of the twentieth century. The aim is to provide clear, well-illustrated accounts of the full range of terminology currently in use, and to evolve histories of its changing usage.

The current state of the discipline of literary studies is one where there is considerable debate concerning basic questions of terminology. This involves, among other things, the boundaries that distinguish the literary from the non-literary; the position of literature within the larger sphere of culture; the relationship between literatures of different cultures; and questions concerning the relation of literary to other cultural forms within the context of interdisciplinary studies.

It is clear that the field of literary criticism and theory is a dynamic and heterogeneous one. The present need is for individual volumes on terms which combine clarity of exposition with an adventurousness of perspective and a breadth of application. Each volume will contain as part of its apparatus some indication of the direction in which the definition of particular terms is likely to move, as well as expanding the disciplinary boundaries within which some of these terms have been traditionally contained. This will involve some re-situation of terms within the larger field of cultural representation, and will introduce examples from the area of film and the modern media in addition to examples from a variety of literary texts.

INTRODUCTION

The twenty-first century is the great age of translation. Millions more people are moving around the planet than at any time in history: some displaced by wars, famine or persecution, some seeking better working opportunities and more economic stability, some simply taking advantage of cheap travel opportunities to explore other places. And as those millions move around, taking their own languages with them, they encounter other languages, other cultural frameworks and other belief systems, hence are compelled, whether consciously or not, to engage in some form of translation. Postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha has seen this mass movement of peoples as a new, emerging global reality, a new international space where great numbers of people have come to live in a state of in-betweenness, endlessly negotiating between the familiar and the unfamiliar, the known and the other (Bhabha, 1994). Translation today is an increasingly common human condition, and the rapid rise of electronic media has also served to heighten awareness of the importance of communicating across cultures. In an age that demands 24-hour breaking news, an age of global anxiety about the ecological survival of the planet, an age of mounting fears of another nuclear

arms race, it is surely more important than at any time in the past for there to be greater awareness of cultural differences and a greater need for intercultural understanding.

In the light of this global phenomenon, it is hardly surprising that translation should have become an object of study in several disciplines, and that since the late 1970s a new field of research, translation studies, should have acquired so much importance around the world. Major social and economic shifts are directly linked to major epistemological shifts, as this book will seek to demonstrate, and the increasing awareness of the complexities involved in translation provides a clear example of the impact of major socio-political changes on the world of academia. Put simply, more people are moving between languages, hence translating more frequently than ever before, and it has become important to understand more about what translation really entails. Around the world today there are translation bureaus that exist to provide translations on commission; translators are trained in colleges and universities; they are employed by international organizations such as the European Union, the United Nations and UNESCO, to name but three of the best known; translators work in advertising and news agencies. In short, translation makes available material across a whole range of cultural activities that would otherwise be inaccessible to anyone who does not have access to other languages.

The layman's view of translation is that it involves a simple process of linguistic transfer, whereby whatever is written in one language (known as the *source* in translation studies terminology) can be transferred unproblematically into another language (known as the *target*). Bilingual dictionaries are there to assist in the transfer process and it can be generally assumed that someone with good knowledge of two languages will be able to produce a competent translation. The assumption that translation is a straightforward process has also meant that the role played by the translator has been seen as relatively unimportant. If translation merely involves knowledge of two languages, then the task of the translator is one that can be carried out by anyone with a modicum of linguistic expertise and training.

The fallacy of such thinking becomes apparent the moment we start to consider what happens when any text is translated. Far

from being a straightforward process of linguistic transfer, translation involves complex negotiation between languages. No two languages share the same structures, syntax and vocabulary, so adjustments always have to be made to accommodate the black holes that yawn when there is no equivalent in the **target language** for a word or an idea expressed in the **source language**. Anyone who has ever translated anything understands this; languages are never identical, hence no translation can ever be the same as the original. This means that the translator has to engage in both interpretation of the source and reformulation in another language. As will be discussed later, translation has been redefined in recent years as a form of **rewriting**, and the status of the translator, once dismissed as little more than a hack, has been revalued.

The twentieth-century critic, I.A. Richards spent some years in Japan, and in an essay entitled 'Towards a Theory of Translating' suggested that translation 'may probably be the most complex type of event in the evolution of the cosmos' (Richards, 1953: 250). This is a large claim, but is taken even further in a more recent book by Bella Brodzki, who argues that translation underwrites 'all cultural transactions, from the most benign to the most venal' (Brodzki, 2007: 2). Brodzki goes so far as to suggest that translation in the twenty-first century, together with gender, should be regarded as fundamental to our conceptualizing of the world in which we live. We can no longer function without translation, and the world we inhabit is a multilingual, multifaceted world.

The basic task of a translator has always been to take a text written in one language and transpose it into another language, for a new set of readers. That notion of transposition is inherent in the very word 'translation', which is derived from the Latin *translatus*, the past participle of the verb *transferre*, meaning to bring or carry across. Other European languages conceptualize translating as a placing across, as in the German *übersetzen*, or as a leading across, as in the French *traduire*. But whether a text is brought, placed or guided across a linguistic boundary, the idea remains the same: something written in one language is moved into another, words and sentences are reshaped and remade, although the assumption is that the original will somehow still be present in the reformulated version. This means that there is

always both a spatial and a temporal dimension in translation, for every translation carries within it the trace of the original from which it is derived. In literary translation this assumption is carried so far as to enable readers of a translation to perceive that what they are reading *is* an original; large numbers of English readers with no Russian claim to have read Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, writers who are generally deemed to have had a huge impact on the English novel, while in Russia or China large numbers of people with no English claim to have read Shakespeare. What they have read, of course, is a translation, although all too often they will not be able to recall the translator's name. The case of Shakespeare is particularly interesting: Tolstoy declared in an essay published in 1906 that Shakespeare's fame originated not in his native land at all, but in Germany, where he had become widely known through the early nineteenth-century translations of Ludwig Tieck and August Wilhelm Schlegel (Tolstoy in LeWinter, 1970: 236). The German Shakespeare was a Romantic revolutionary (as was the Czech Shakespeare) and in 1839 Heinrich Heine was bold enough to declare that 'the Germans have comprehended Shakespeare better than the English' (Heine in LeWinter, 1970: 141). The impact of Shakespeare on German literature of the nineteenth century was so great that arguably he ceased to be perceived as an English writer and entered fully into the German canon.

Since ancient times, there have been attempts to define what it is that translators do, to explain to those who are monolingual what happens in the process of translating, and to provide guidelines for good translation practice. Among the best-known early formulations of advice for successful translators is Cicero's 'De Optimo Genere Oratorum' ('On the Best Kind of Orator') from 46 BC, in which he distinguishes between word-for-word translation and a looser form of translation that serves to convey something of the style of the original. Cicero claims that he has translated as an orator, not as a hack, 'for I saw my duty not as counting out words for the reader, but as weighing them out' (Cicero 2006: 21), a distinction further developed by Quintilian in his *Institutio Oratoria* (*The Institute of Oratory*) in the first century AD. Quintilian stresses the importance for trainee orators of

imitating superior Greek models, and suggests that translation of Greek texts can serve as a means for Latin orators to improve their style and to develop their own language. Creative translation that goes beyond the literal rendering of a Greek text is, therefore, a significant literary practice because it can have a major impact on the receiving, or target literary system. Imitation and translation, for Quintilian, are linked modes of developing one's own writerly and oratorical skills.

For Quintilian, following Cicero, translation played a significant role in asserting Roman cultural independence from the Greek models, and so assumed a broader political significance beyond the immediate textual dimension. Translation for the Romans was a means of making a statement about the status of the target vernacular in relation to the original: no longer in a subservient position, vernacular Latin could match Greek and perhaps even surpass it. Later, during the Renaissance, translators into vernacular languages from Latin would follow the same strategy, seeking to demonstrate the possibilities opened up in those languages through creative translations.

The Roman distinction between literal translation and a broader, less slavish form of translation is most clearly expounded by St Jerome (*c.* 348–420 AD), who undertook the Herculean task of producing the Vulgate translation of the Bible. Jerome recognized that word-for-word, or literal translation could result in nonsense, but acknowledged also that sense-for-sense translation, which would give the translator more freedom, might also provoke attack on the grounds of inaccuracy. In his forthright way, he declared that the best way to grasp the complexities of translation was to invite literal translations of Homer:

> If there is anybody who does not believe that the power of a language is changed in translation, let him translate Homer literally into Latin – or rather, let him translate Homer into prose. Then he will see a laughable bit of work, and the greatest of poets scarcely able to speak.
> (Hieronymus, 2006: 29)

The distinction between word-for-word, or literal translation, and sense-for-sense translation that does not closely follow the original

linguistic structures, is still as powerful today as it was 2,000 years ago. Fierce debates have raged about the limits of a translator's freedom, about whether a translator's prime responsibility is to the original author or to the target language reader and, arguably, all theories of translation revolve around the extent to which a translator may be free to diverge from an original. In the 1960s and 1970s various theories of equivalence were proposed, of which the most widely known is the distinction made by the American Bible translator, Eugene Nida, between 'formal' and 'dynamic' equivalence. In this instance Nida continues to follow the old word-for-word versus sense-for-sense distinction, although in formulating his theory of dynamic equivalence, he posits a notion of equivalent effect. Formal equivalence, in Nida's view, focuses attention on the form and content of the source, and can be called a 'gloss translation', whereas dynamic equivalence seeks to ensure that 'the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message' (Nida, 2000 [1964]: 129).

German translation theorists, notably Katharina Weiss and Hans Vermeer have also developed a variant of the word for word/sense for sense dichotomy through their highly successful *skopos* theory. *Skopos*, in Vermeer's definition 'is a technical term for the aim or purpose of a translation' (Vermeer, 2000: 221), and his hypothesis is that the aim of the translation justifies the strategies employed. So, for example, a legal translator will not even attempt to produce a translation that closely follows the structures of the source text, but will formulate the target language version according to the norms of textual construction operating in that language's legal system. The success of *skopos* theory shows that a concept of translation that focuses on the function of a text in the target system enables translators to shake off old-fashioned ideas about faithfulness to the original, as will be discussed more fully later.

In what has become a classic essay, 'On Linguistic Aspects of Translation', the Russian scholar Roman Jakobson makes a distinction between three kinds of translation. His essay remains one of the most important statements about translation, because of his broad employment of the term 'translation' and his efforts to distinguish between what he saw as different categories of

translation. Jakobson's first category is what he terms **intralingual translation**, or *rewording*, that is when a text is reshaped by someone working within the same language. Parody, satire, modernization are all examples of a kind of translation that takes place within the boundaries of a single language. This is a radical concept, because it suggests that translation is not only a process that happens across languages, but is also a process that can and does take place within an individual linguistic system.

Jakobson's second category is **interlingual translation**, which he defines as *translation proper*, 'an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language' (Jakobson, 1992: 145). This is what is generally understood as translation, since it involves the movement of texts across linguistic frontiers, and it is this category that has led to the majority of writings about translation.

But then Jacobson adds a third category, which he terms **intersemiotic translation**, or *transmutation*, which he defines as the interpretation of verbal signs by other, nonverbal sign systems. This is the loosest and most open to interpretation of his categories, and has perhaps raised the most questions and led to the most debate, for here we encounter issues that we shall return to later in this book: that is, what the limits are of translation and when a translation ceases to be a translation at all. Intersemiotic translation, as Jakobson has outlined it, can therefore include genre shifts, such as film versions of novels, or poems based on paintings, while performances of plays are often referred to as 'translations' when a written text is made physically manifest on a stage as performance.

Jakobson begins his essay with a quotation from Bertrand Russell who, writing on logical positivism, had declared that no one could understand the word 'cheese' without first having a non-linguistic acquaintance with the object that is cheese. Jakobson proceeds from this statement to a broader discussion of signs, starting with the category of the verbal and moving outwards. For, in essence, this is what always happens in translation: the starting point is the verbal sign, but as the translator begins the task of transposing verbal signs across language boundaries, so a host of interconnected problems arise. Jakobson develops Russell's cheese example, and argues that direct experience is not

always essential to an understanding of words. Someone from a cheese-less culture may still understand that cheese is a dairy product made from curds. We may never have tasted ambrosia or nectar, the food and drink of classical gods, but we accept that we can understand their linguistic meaning and use them accordingly. Moreover, the word 'cheese' has meaning beyond the basic fact of its being a lexical item. Jakobson points out that in order to introduce an unfamiliar word (or any word used in an unfamiliar way), what is needed is 'an array of linguistic signs', since the meaning of any linguistic sign involves what he calls 'its translation into some further, alternative sign' (Jakobson, 1992: 145). Expanding on the cheese example, he points out that there is no precise equivalent for the English word 'cheese' in Russian, not because Russians do not have a food made of pressed curds, but because the Russian language makes distinctions between types of cheese that English does not.

Anyone who is bilingual or multilingual will understand the point that Jakobson is making, for even small children learn very quickly that some things can be said in one of their languages that cannot be reproduced in the same way in their second language. Pupils struggling to translate basic foreign language exercises find bilingual dictionaries baffling. How do you say 'home' in French, a child once asked, since the dictionary gives *foyer*, *maison*, *pays natal*, *patrie?* And how to explain the particular use of the word 'home' to non-native English speakers, when the phrase 'let's go home' can mean many things, including a return to one's house, to one's native land, to one's birthplace or simply to the hotel where one happens to be staying overnight? In his novel *Ignorance*, Milan Kundera writes powerfully about the different words that imply a sense of loss, of not-belonging, of absence, words that belong exclusively to particular languages and whose full field of meaning cannot be completely transferred to other languages:

> The Greek word for 'return' is *nostos. Algos* means 'suffering'. So nostalgia is the suffering caused by an unappeased yearning to return. To express that fundamental notion most Europeans can utilize a word derived from the Greek (*nostalgia, nostalgie*) as well as other words with roots in their national languages: *añoranza*, say the Spaniards; *saudade*, say the Portuguese. In each language these words have a different semantic nuance ... Certain languages have problems with nostalgia: the French can only express it by the noun from the Greek root, and have no verb for it ... the Germans tend to say *Sehnsucht* in speaking of the desire for an absent thing. But *Sehnsucht* can refer both to something that has existed and to something that has never existed (a new adventure), and therefore it does not necessarily imply the *nostos* idea.
>
> (Kundera, 2002: 5–6)

It is not only abstract words that cause problems for translators, even ordinary, everyday words may be used contextually in quite different ways. To give an elementary example, British English makes great use of 'please', 'thank you' and 'sorry'. Visitors to Britain can be perplexed when someone they accidentally push in a queue says 'sorry' even though it is not their fault, while the insistence on adding 'please' to every request, whether in shops or on public transport appears similarly comic to a speaker who is used to using the imperative politely. Yet English has no equivalent of the Italian *Prego* or Swedish *Vaer så god* ..., commonly used by waiters, shopkeepers or anyone offering something to a customer. English has no word associated with proffering something, so either nothing is said, or speakers resort to 'Here you are', and, these days, to the ubiquitous American 'Enjoy your meal' in restaurants. Interestingly, the phrase 'Have a nice day!', another Americanism, has become commonplace since the 1980s in variants of English because of its use in the service industries. These are banal examples of daily linguistic practice, all involving courteous behaviour but according to slightly different conventions, and as one moves between languages, so these conventions need to be understood.

This kind of understanding is the issue at the very heart of translation: not only are languages not the same, but the ways in which languages are used are never the same, so the task of the translator is indeed a highly complex one, for it requires negotiation of difference that is both linguistic and cultural. Such negotiation is not simple, indeed there are those who argue that translation is a doomed enterprise from the start, since so much is

lost when a message of any sort is transferred from one language to another. Italian has a famous saying: *traduttore, traditore* (translator, traitor) meaning that translators always betray whatever they are translating.

The idea of translation as betrayal is important in several respects. First of all, translation is necessarily about trust: if readers cannot understand what someone has written in another language, they are reliant on a translator. Readers need to know that what they are reading is the equivalent of what the original writer wrote, for if they doubt the translator, then they doubt the translation. This can have very serious repercussions, especially for the translator; for example, translators in war zones are often maligned and persecuted for fraternizing with the enemy. Translating in a conflict zone can be seen as an act of sabotage, or as a betrayal of one's people, and sadly translators have often paid the price. The bodies of translators found in Afghanistan in 2011, shot and with their tongues cut out, is symbolic of the distrust in which translators can be held.

The history of Bible translation is also full of atrocity stories. The bones of John Wycliffe were disinterred and burned and then scattered in the river, decades after his death. William Tyndale was not so lucky and was burned at the stake for the crime of having produced a version of the New Testament that was too closely associated with Lutheranism. Sir Thomas More, one of his harshest critics wrote in his 'Confutation of Tyndale's Answer' (1532) that Tyndale had changed

> the common words to the intent to make a change in the faith. As for example that he changed the word church into this word congregation ... and he changed priest into senior because he intended to set forth Luther's heresy teaching that priesthood is not a sacrament but the office of a lay man or a lay woman appointed by the people to preach. And he changed penance into repenting ...
>
> (More, 1992 [1532]: 71)

Ironically, Tyndale's translation served as a model for the Authorized Version of the Bible that appeared in 1611 and had a major impact on English literature more generally.

Translation raises fundamental questions about the ethics of intercultural communication and about the trust we place in the translator. But there is another aspect to the issue of translation and betrayal: once translation starts to be seen as an act that involves loss and betrayal, it can be perceived as a literary activity of inferior status to that of a so-called original. This is precisely what has happened in Western literary history as, for example, up until Shakespeare's day, clear distinctions were not necessarily made between 'original' writing and translations. The setting of a border between something termed 'original' and something termed a 'translation' only comes into being in the early seventeenth century, linked to the spread of printing and the diffusion of the book, which prioritized 'authorship'. Translators, wrote John Dryden in his Dedication to the *Aeneis* (1697) are like labourers toiling away in someone's else's vineyard; they do all the work, but the wine belongs to someone else (Dryden, 2006 [1697]). But Dryden was being ironic here, as he was when he compared the translator to a man trying to dance on ropes with his legs in fetters, the fetters being the shape of the original that constrains free movement. Dryden played with metaphors of constraint, but as a prolific translator, he acknowledged the skills required to translate, and as any reading of his translations shows, he did not slavishly follow any of the originals with which he was engaged.

Writers have repeatedly returned to the vexed questions surrounding the freedom of the translator and to the ethics of translating. Vladimir Nabokov, one of the great twentieth-century translators, whose personal circumstances also led to him becoming a bilingual novelist when he fled from the Nazis and settled in the United States in 1940, responded bitterly in his 'Problems of Translation: *"Onegin* in English"' to a self-imposed question, with the following verse:

> What is translation? On a platter
> A poet's pale and glaring head,
> A parrot's screech, a monkey's chatter,
> And profanation of the dead.
>
> (Nabokov, 2000)

Nabokov's introduction to his translation of Pushkin's great poem lays out his own pessimistic views on the possibilities available to a translator. He discusses the specific features of Russian prosody and of Pushkin's particular innovatory genius, notes the strong French influences on Pushkin's style and compares translations of *Eugene Onegin*, all of which he sees as failures because:

> Anyone who wishes to attempt a translation of *Onegin* should acquire exact information in regard to a number of relevant subjects, such as the Fables of Krilov, Byron's works, French poets of the eighteenth century, Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Heloise*, Pushkin's biography, banking games, Russian songs related to divination, Russian military ranks of the time as compared to western European and American ones, the difference between a cranberry and a lingonberry, the rules of the English pistol duel as used in Russia, and the Russian language.
>
> (Nabokov, 2000)

Recognizing the impossibility of acquiring such encyclopaedic knowledge and being able to combine it with an ability to write good poetry, Nabokov calls instead for copious footnotes, 'footnotes reaching up like skyscrapers' leaving 'only the gleam of one textual line between commentary and eternity' (Nabokov, 2000). His own translation did indeed include copious footnotes; when it was published in 1964 it consisted of four separate volumes, one for each of the Russian and English texts and a further two volumes of notes and commentaries. Nabokov's view was that the text could not stand alone and that without the footnotes 'like skyscrapers', English-language readers would not be able to grasp even a hint of why Pushkin's poem should be considered one of the greatest Russian masterpieces of all time. Translations that endeavoured to render the 'spirit' of Pushkin's work without the background knowledge required for a full understanding of how, why and when he wrote it could not be anything other than profanations.

Theorists of translation have tended to fall into one of two categories: the pessimistic, who see all translation as doomed to failure and so emphasize what is lost, albeit often with considerable irony, and the optimistic who acknowledge the difficulties but seek solutions and view translation as a fundamental means of enriching a literary system. Nabokov's essay can be viewed as an example of the pessimistic position, while on the other hand, Walter Benjamin's essay, 'Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers' ('The Task of the Translator') can be said to fall into the other category. Benjamin's essay was written as an introduction to his translation of Baudelaire's *Tableaux Parisiens* published in 1923, and has been a source of much substantial writing about translation by such figures as Jacques Derrida, Haroldo de Campos and Umberto Eco, to name but three. Benjamin sees the act of translation as creating a third space, distinct from source and target in which a unifying pure language that is hidden in any language can be revealed:

> It is the task of the translator to release in his own language that pure language which is under the spell of another, to liberate the language imprisoned in a work in his recreation of that work. For the sake of pure language, he breaks through in his re-creation of that work.
>
> (Benjamin, 1992 [1923]: 80–1)

The translator, according to Benjamin, works like an archaeologist putting together fragments of a vessel in order to restore it to its original shape, and has to reassemble it in such a way as to incorporate the mode of signification of the original. If this task is accomplished, then the translator has to bear the responsibility for the continued existence of the original but in another context. A translation, seen from this perspective, becomes the afterlife of a text, ensuring its existence in another time and place, effectively saving that text from extinction.

What made Benjamin's essay so important in the later years of the twentieth century and led to his rediscovery by postmodernist scholars is that he highlights both the importance of translation as an activity that ensures the survival of a text and the significance of the role played by the individual translator. This is an important message today in an age of heightened translation activity and multilingualism. Benjamin was writing, of course, from within the German tradition with its rich history of translating and statements about translation, but in emphasizing the

positive aspects of translation his essay acquired global relevance. In the English-speaking world, Benjamin's views contrasted sharply with the more generally-accepted notion that translation was a secondary activity, a craft rather than an art, and his articulation of the task of the translator as an agent of liberation also struck a chord with postcolonial thinking, as will be discussed in a later chapter.

In 1995, the American translator and literary critic, Lawrence Venuti published a monograph that has come to be highly influential in translation studies. Entitled *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, the book sought to expose the Anglo-American preference for fluent translations that can be read as though the works had been written in English in the first instance. Venuti's position is that this kind of translation not only erases signs of the foreign in a text, but also affirms a belief in the superiority of English. He argues that translators in the Anglo-American context are thus rendered invisible, a fact that contributes to their marginality and economic exploitation. Behind this invisibility is a trade imbalance that 'decreases the cultural capital of foreign values in English by limiting the number of foreign texts translated and submitting them to domestic revision' (Venuti, 1995: 17). He notes the disparity between the percentage of books published in different countries that are translated, and concludes that at a time when British and American cultural products are exported on a vast scale, the number of books translated into English remains well below 5 per cent, with translations almost wholly invisible and concludes: 'The translator's invisibility is symptomatic of a complacency in Anglo-American relations with cultural others, a complacency that can be described-without too much exaggeration-as imperialistic abroad and xenophobic at home' (Venuti, 1995: 17).

Venuti's polemical monograph was very timely, for he drew attention to the unequal power relationships prevalent between cultural and linguistic systems. Since his book appeared, a great deal more work has emerged on the relation between translation and power, the agency of the translator, the role of translation in colonization, and the complex relationship between translation and censorship. In a collection of essays aptly entitled *Translation and Power*, Maria Tymoczko and Edwin Gentzler argue in their introduction that translation plays both a political and an epistemological role and that the act of translation itself is involved in the production of knowledge. They see translation as fundamental to the diffusion and transmission of knowledge, and recognize also that translation is not, and never has been, an innocent activity. From the earliest statements about translation by Roman orators, we can see that there has been critical awareness of both the importance of translation as a force for innovation, and the role of translators in changing discourses of power:

> Translation is thus not simply an act of selection, assemblage, structuration, and fabrication, and even, in some cases, of falsification, refusal of information, counterfeiting, and the creation of secret codes. In these ways translators, as much as creative writers and politicians, participate in the powerful acts that create knowledge and shape culture.
>
> (Tymoczko and Gentzler, 2002: xxii)

A fundamental premise of this book is that translation is at the heart of global communication today, and also that translation has played a central role in the transmission of ideas and literatures over the centuries. So great is the role played by translation that it is no longer possible to view the translator as a lesser figure than any other writer, since the translator is the agent through which transcultural transmissions are effected. In this, the new Age of Translation, the time has come to acknowledge and to celebrate the centrality of translation and of the translator.

1

THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSLATION STUDIES

BEGINNINGS

Despite the historical significance of translation, systematic investigation into translation is a relatively recent phenomenon. Of course individual translators have, from time to time, commented on their practice, in prefaces, essays, notes and letters, but the first extended critical account of translation in English is generally held to be Alexander Fraser Tytler's *Essay on the Principles of Translation*, which appeared in 1791. Tytler was a Scottish lawyer who translated some of Petrarch's sonnets and a play by Schiller, and who formulated a set of principles for determining good translation, expressing the view that a translator needed to possess genius akin to that of the original author for a translation to succeed. Tytler's essay is barely known today, although it went through several editions, the last of which appeared in 1813, the same year in which his German contemporary, Friedrich Schleiermacher gave his lecture entitled *Methoden des Übersetzens* at the Royal Academy of Sciences in Berlin. Schleiermacher's lecture

continues to be relevant and has served as the basis for much modern theorizing about translation, as we see most notably in the **foreignization**/domestication debate raised in a twentieth-century context by Lawrence Venuti. Schleiermacher distinguished between two types of translation, the first being when a translator seeks to make the original author speak as though he or she had written originally in the translator's language. This is what Venuti terms **acculturation**, and that Schleiermacher refutes as a foolish enterprise, more like paraphrase or imitation, in his terms, than genuine translation. Instead, what the translator should do is to remind the reader that the world of the original was a different world, since the purpose of all translation is to give readers 'an enjoyment of foreign works as unadulterated as possible' (Schleiermacher, 1992 [1791]: 52).

Arguably, the point at which systematic investigation into the processes of translation started was during the Second World War (1939–45). This is the view of James Holmes, an American translator-scholar resident in the Netherlands, in his important paper, 'The Name and Nature of Translation Studies' that first appeared in 1972. Holmes first coined the term 'translation studies' in that paper, and his work was of great importance in the early stages of the growth of the subject. Holmes sums up prevailing attitudes to the study of translation :

> After centuries of incidental and desultory attention from a scattering of authors, philologians, and literary scholars, plus here and there a theologian or an idiosyncratic linguist, the subject of translation has enjoyed a marked and constant increase in interest on the part of scholars in recent years, with the Second World War as a kind of turning point.
>
> (Holmes, 2000 [1972]: 173)

What Holmes does not discuss in detail here is why this should have been the case, although he knew well the reason for it. The renewed interest in translation can be said to have been linked to a failed experiment: the success of code-breaking technology developed towards the end of the war raised hopes in the ensuing

Cold War period that technology might also enable instant translation. Computers, which were rapidly being developed, could surely be programmed to ensure that decision-makers in Washington could have access to Russian media and vice versa within hours. The utopian desire for instant computer translations was never achieved because it was premised on naïve ideas about equivalence as sameness, and hence the early attempts to produce instant translations of Russian newspapers such as *Pravda* occasionally resulted in gobbledygook. The kinds of computer translation packages available today are extraordinarily sophisticated in comparison with the early experiments, but although some of the attempts at translation through computers in the Cold War period now appear risible, the experiment did raise important questions about interlingual transfer processes and about the meaning of equivalence. James Holmes was indeed perceptive to highlight the Second World War as a turning point in the study and practice of translation around the world.

THE LEUVEN GROUP

In the 1970s a small loosely-knit international group of academics began meeting to talk about ways of studying translation. They came from mixed backgrounds in terms of their intellectual formation: some were trained in literary theory, some had a background in linguistics, some were working in comparative literature. Nationalities in the group included Dutch, Belgian, Israeli, Slovak, American, German and English and all had a multilingual background of one kind or another. What brought them together, apart from the fact that they all had experience of translating from different languages, was a strong sense of grievance, for all had come to believe that while translation was becoming more important in everyone's lives, it was still not studied systematically in universities and the training of professional translators remained at a very low level. The turning point for the group was a meeting in Leuven in 1976, when they decided to define themselves as researchers working in the new discipline henceforth to be known as translation studies. A short manifesto statement that all could

subscribe to was drawn up by Andre Lefevere, and published with the proceedings of the seminar two years later as an appendix entitled 'Translation Studies: The Goal of the Discipline' (Lefevere, 1978).

In his opening statement, Lefevere announced that he 'would like to propose the name "translation studies" for the discipline which concerns itself with the problems raised by the production and description of translations' (Lefevere, 1978: 234). In making this statement, Lefevere was following James Holmes and the two men worked closely together to produce the manifesto, which proposed that the goal of the new discipline (like Holmes before him, Lefevere uses the term 'discipline') was 'to produce a comprehensive theory that can also be used as a guideline for the production of translations' (Lefevere, 1978: 234). Theory was to be developed along lines of argument that would be neither hermeneutic, that is, would not be concerned exclusively with the production of concealed meaning, nor neopositivist, in that it would require specialized and hence limited scientific knowledge about the source; such theory would also be constantly tested by case histories, so would not be static but would change and develop. Lefevere warned against what he called futile terminological squabbling, a point Holmes had also made in his 1972 essay, and advised against the coining of new terminology and the invention of untested theoretical concepts. What was seen as important was the creation of a field that would be inclusive rather than exclusive, hence the importance of finding a language that would neither put off actual translators nor create a cadre of theorists speaking only to one another in their own refined jargon. With the hindsight of several decades his final statement reads prophetically:

> It is not inconceivable that a theory elaborated in this way might be of help in the formulation of literary and linguistic theory; just as it is not inconceivable that translations made according to the guidelines tentatively laid down in the theory might influence the development of the receiving culture.
>
> (Lefevere, 1978: 235)

POLYSYSTEMS THEORY

One of the most influential papers to come out of the 1976 meeting was an essay by the Israeli systems theorist, Itamar Even-Zohar, entitled somewhat awkwardly 'The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem'. This essay has had considerable impact, and a great deal of historical research into translation derives in some measure from Even-Zohar's polemical piece. In this essay, he began by noting that very little research had been carried out into what he termed 'the major role translation has played in the crystallization of national culture' (Even-Zohar, 2000 [1978]: 192), and that what work there was had been sporadic. He then went on to point out that translation has played a major role in shaping literatures, despite its relegation to the periphery by most literary historians. Even-Zohar challenged the marginalization of translation and proposed that far more research was needed into how texts are selected for translation, what the impact of those translations on the receiving literature might be, whether there are patterns of greater or lesser translation activity at certain times and in certain cultures, and if so why this should be the case. His colleague, Gideon Toury later expanded Even-Zohar's ideas, in an important essay entitled 'A Rationale for Descriptive Translation Studies' (1985) in which he argued persuasively that research into translational phenomena should be systematic, focusing on norms and models rather than on individual case studies:

> We cannot properly analyse specific translations if we do not take into account other translations belonging to the same system(s), and if we do not analyse them on various micro- and macro-structural levels. It is not at all absurd to study a single translated text or a single translator, but it is absurd to disregard the fact that this translation or this translator has positive (or negative) connections with other translations and translators.
>
> (Toury, 1985: 51)

Both Even-Zohar and Toury were making a case for the study of translation to be embedded in a broad socio-cultural context. The

tools of textual analysis deriving from Formalism with its emphasis on the literariness of literature (like the tools deriving in the Anglo-American world from New Criticism and Practical Criticism) could and should be employed within an historical framework. 'Our object', declared Toury, is translated literature, 'that is to say, translational norms, models, behaviour and systems' (Toury, 1985: 51). Toury called for international research programmes that would investigate and seek to identify broad patterns of translation activity in a given context, and would rethink the divisions between literary and non-literary translations. Throughout the 1970s, Even-Zohar and Toury were engaged in developing a theory of polysystem as a way of describing all forms of literary production. Andre Lefevere (1992a) points out that a systems approach to literary studies aims at making literary texts accessible to the reader, by means of description, analysis, historiography and translation; hence what was proposed was a more 'scientific' model, and one that would not make artificial distinctions between so-called 'high' and 'low' or 'popular' literature. All forms of writing would receive equal attention and be examined in their full cultural contexts.

In this respect, without pushing the parallels too far, although their starting points were different and there was a weakness in the systems approach in that it tended towards universalism, parallels can be seen with some of the thinking in the 1970s by Anglo-Saxon cultural studies theorists such as Raymond Williams or Stuart Hall, cultural studies practitioners who similarly, although in different ways, sought to abolish evaluative distinctions between 'high' and 'low' literature. Hence the expansion of cultural studies, as a field in its own right and as a method of studying a broad range of texts (written, visual, performative) can be seen today as having paralleled the expansion of the study of translation in the 1980s.

Even-Zohar stressed the impact of translation on the growth and development of literary systems, pointing out that on occasions, translations can be a powerful force for innovation by introducing new forms, genres and ideas. This means that translations can sometimes hold a primary position within a literature, as was the case with the Renaissance sonnet, for example, a form popularized

in Italy by the poet Petrarch, that spread rapidly across a wide range of European languages as a result of translations from its original Italian and achieved canonical status in most Western literatures. However, sometimes, translations can be a major factor for conservatism, when translators are out of touch with innovatory trends in their own times and 'adhere to norms which have been rejected either recently or long before by the (newly) established center' (Even-Zohar, 2000 [1978]: 195). In this case the impact of such translated texts will be minimal and they will most likely be relegated to a peripheral position. He sketched out three situations in which translations might acquire a primary position: when a literature is developing, when a literature perceives itself as weak or marginal and when a literature is going through a period of crisis or is at a turning point in its development. We might see the early medieval period (from the ninth to the twelfth centuries), when vernacular languages were developing across Europe, as an example of the first situation, when on the one hand, sacred texts in Latin began to be glossed by scribes, thereby providing some of the earliest written examples of vernacular translation while, on the other hand, bards and troubadours diffused courtly love poetry across Europe in vernacular languages.

A good example of Even-Zohar's second situation can be found in the large number of translations made into minority languages such as Finnish or Czech in the nineteenth century when the struggle for political independence was matched by the struggle to establish a national literature. The Czech scholar, Vladimir Macura has pointed out that during the Czech Revivalist movement, for example, translation 'was not seen as a passive submission to cultural impulses from abroad', but on the contrary was seen 'as an active, even aggressive act, an appropriation of foreign cultural values' (Macura 1990: 68). He cites Jan Evangelista Purkyně, a key figure in the Czech Revivalist movement, who urged his compatriots to fight against the imposition of anti-Slav linguistic and cultural policies by 'taking possession of anything excellent they have created in the world of the mind' (Macura, 1990: 69). Translation in such situations could, and did serve the nationalist cause and in the Czech case, led to a flow of vernacular writing that proved to be unstoppable.

Even-Zohar's third situation can be seen in cases such as the government-led translation project that formed part of Kemal Atatürk's Westernization strategy for Turkey in the 1920s, when there was a deliberate policy of translation as part of a nationwide education policy that sought to move the country closer to the West. It can also be observed today in the booming number of translations being made and published in China that are of strategic value in establishing and affirming its status as a major global power. However, where a literary system sees itself as being in a strong position, the need for translations is likely to diminish. This can be seen if we consider diachronic patterns of translation activity in English: the Renaissance was a period of intense translation activity which continued into the seventeenth century, but by the latter part of the eighteenth century not only was translation *into* English slowing down, but translation *out of* English was increasing right across Europe. By the end of the nineteenth century the pattern that still prevails today was established, wherein only a small percentage of books published in English were translations. When Lawrence Venuti published his history of translation, *The Translator's Invisibility* in 1995, he drew attention to the huge trade imbalance in the publishing world, noting that in 1990 British and American translations amounted to less than 5 per cent of the total, compared to 25.4 per cent in Italy. Those figures have barely changed, yet a glance at the review pages of journals in smaller European countries or a walk round a bookshop shows immediately how prevalent is translation of newly published books out of English into other languages. What this indicates is a double process: the rise of English as a global language means that more texts are being produced in English that are consequently translated into other languages, while at the same time English appears more self-sufficient and so resistant to translation.

Holmes, Even-Zohar and Toury, along with José Lambert and others set out the parameters of a new approach to the study of translation, which has since then sometimes been referred to as 'the polysystems approach', sometimes as 'descriptive translation studies', and, since Toury's paper appeared in a collection edited by Theo Hermans in 1985 entitled *The Manipulation of Literature*,

as 'the Manipulation school'. What all advocated was a more systematic enquiry into translation, both in terms of the fortunes of translations in the receiving literature, and in terms of the strategies employed by different translators at different times. However, initial response to the embryonic field of translation studies was not particularly promising: linguists remained on the whole wedded to exploring relative concepts of equivalence, translations continued to be seen as outside the generally accepted literary canons and the Leuven group were criticized for shifting the emphasis onto the target culture to the detriment of the textual source. But what the new approach succeeded in doing was to position the study of translation within the study of culture more broadly, highlighting political and socio-economic factors, while continuing to insist on the importance of close textual analysis; in short, creating an approach to translation that was as much concerned with ideology as with philosophical debates about meaning. The Leuven group were all opposed to what they saw as sterile debates about definitions of 'faithfulness' and exact equivalence, subscribing to Holmes' blunt, common-sense statement about intellectual and creative diversity:

> Put five translators onto rendering even a syntactically straight-forward, metrically unbound, magically simple poem like Carl Sandberg's 'Fog' into, say Dutch. The chances that any two of the five translations will be identical are very slight indeed. Then set twenty-five other translators into turning the five Dutch versions back into English, five translators to a version. Again the result will almost certainly be as many renderings as there are translators. To call this equivalence is perverse.
>
> (Holmes, 1988a: 53)

Edwin Gentzler has charted the emergence of the line of translation studies known as the polysystems approach that derived from the Leuven meetings in his book, *Contemporary Translation Theories,* first published in 1992 and revised in 2001. He notes the links between polysystems theory, as elaborated by Even-Zohar, and Russian Formalism, and he is critical of what he sees as a tendency to overgeneralize in an attempt to establish universal

laws of literary transmission. Gentzler finds Even-Zohar's complex model of cultural systems too reliant on Formalist concepts such as 'literariness', but despite his criticisms, he nevertheless acknowledges Even-Zohar's pioneering work:

> By expanding the theoretical boundaries of traditional translation theory, based all too frequently on linguistic models or undeveloped literary theories, and embedding translated literature into a larger cultural context, Even-Zohar opened the way for translation theory to advance beyond prescriptive aesthetics.
>
> (Gentzler, 2001: 123)

CHALLENGING ORTHODOXIES

It is important to remember that attempts to found a new discipline called translation studies were happening in parallel with other critical endeavours in the humanities more generally. The student protests in Europe and North America in the late 1960s and the expansion of higher education in general that began during that time led to substantial rethinking of university curricula. New fields of study began to emerge that reflected social changes: sociology, cultural studies, film and media studies and theatre studies all began gradually to acquire academic status and respectability, disturbing and often displacing traditional single-subject boundaries. Indeed, the term 'studies' came to be used increasingly where once the words 'language and literature' might have been employed, a further indication of the shift towards interdisciplinary thinking. But to understand how translation studies came to grow so exponentially in the 1980s and expand globally in the 1990s, the question needs to be posed as to why the Leuven gatherings produced ideas that were so significantly different from much of the research into translation that was being done elsewhere, mainly in university departments of linguistics. The answer lies in the contestatory and adversarial nature of those meetings: the participants came together because they shared a sense of grievance about the way translation was being treated in linguistics and in literary studies. Put simply, it was

felt that linguistic approaches to translation were too narrowly focused and tended to ignore the broader cultural issues of textual production, while literary approaches continued to see translation as a second class activity and ignored its formative role in the development of individual literatures. The one approach was seen as too narrowly structuralist in its emphasis on the formal properties of language, the other as too crudely evaluative. Moreover the sharp divide between linguistics and the study of literature as these disciplines had evolved within the academy, contributed to the failure to consider translation seriously as an activity that was both literary and linguistic.

It is therefore sensible to see the early stages of translation studies in conjunction with two other fields that were developing at the same time, driven also by an intention to challenge the academic establishment: gender studies and postcolonial studies. Researchers in all three fields attacked traditional assumptions about the centrality of the literary canon, questioning the ways in which canons had come to be created. All three were concerned, in the early stages of their development, with revising their various histories, in order to chart the ways in which assumptions about gender, translation and colonial expansion had grown and had become acceptable. The slogan 'hidden from history', coined by the British left-wing feminist historian Sheila Rowbotham who used it as the title of a book in 1973, was taken up more broadly by feminist scholars who exposed the male-dominated nature of literary and cultural history and began to question why the work of so many women had been ignored or forgotten. The growth of women's studies and then of gender studies is directly linked to the historical research of those early years that both exposed unequal power relations and brought to light the names of countless talented women who had indeed been hidden from the history books.

Similarly, postcolonial research in its early stages called into question the monocentrism of colonization and its universal assumptions about language and culture. Here too the emphasis of early postcolonial research was on rewriting history to take into account other narratives than those of the dominant power. Edward Said's *Orientalism* was published in 1978, in the same year

as Lefevere's manifesto of translation studies. One year later, in 1979, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's landmark feminist study of women writers, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, appeared. Women's studies, postcolonial studies and translation studies were all starting out at around the same time, heading off on journeys along different tracks but with similar objectives: to map out new ways of reaching their destination and to challenge long-held assumptions about what could be seen along the way. All three fields have developed significantly since the 1970s and there have been points when research has coincided and become collaborative across all three, but all shared a sense of frustration with established literary and language study and all three began by rethinking widely held assumptions about the writing of history.

A TIMELY CRITICAL VENTURE

At this juncture, reference should be made to a series of short monographs published by Routledge from 1977 onwards. Entitled *New Accents*, the series was edited by Terence Hawkes, and in his general editor's preface Hawkes explained its rationale. Starting with a statement about living in a time of radical and rapid social change, Hawkes suggested that the principal impact of such change was to be felt in literary studies: assumptions and presuppositions about traditional literary disciplines were being eroded, inherited modes and categories were no longer relevant to the generations, born in the aftermath of the Second World War. Significantly, he suggested that the time had come to look beyond the Anglo-American world and its values and traditions. The first book in the series, written by Hawkes himself, was an introduction to structuralism and semiotics, neither of which had taken root in Anglo-Saxon soil. Volumes on deconstruction, formalism and Marxism, feminist criticism, postmodernism, reception theory, poststructuralism and postcolonial theory all served to introduce English-language readers to critical thinking from other cultures. My own *Translation Studies* which came out in 1980 provided a basic guide to translation and, like so many books in the series, was to remain in print for the next 30 years, with a fourth edition appearing in 2013. The impact of this series

was enormous, for the books provided introductions to complex theoretical fields and were designed to be instantly accessible to a wide range of readers. Through the good fortune of appearing in the hugely successful *New Accents* series therefore, *Translation Studies* became by default a fundamental student-friendly text used around the world in its many translated versions. In his *Contemporary Translation Theories*, Edwin Gentzler points out that in trying to appeal to a larger audience than those immediately involved in translation studies, 'Bassnett was deliberately didactic and provocative in order to stimulate interest, promote discussion and clarify differences' (Gentzler, 2001: 100). Being deliberately provocative was, in 1980, a conscious strategy for those of us seeking to engage with more authoritative discourses in literary studies in general, whether we were seeking to promote interest in gender questions, postcolonial issues or translation problems. Obviously translation studies has developed in all sorts of directions since 1980, but the worldwide distribution of the *New Accents* books played a major role in bringing the idea of systematic study of a field known as translation studies to a far wider audience than the Leuven group ever envisioned.

Today, some of the most-widely respected work in translation studies has emanated from researchers not directly connected to the Leuven group and to the polysystems approach. Linguists such as Mona Baker, Basil Hatim, Ian Mason and Mary Snell-Hornby, to name but four in the English-speaking world, have made valuable contributions to the field, and linguistics itself has undergone its own version of a **cultural turn**. Outside, the English-speaking world, translation experts in Brazil, China, Africa, India, Iran and the Arab world have utilized some of the ideas and methods deriving from and building on early translation studies publications, repositioning descriptive translation studies and rethinking the idea of a cultural turn within their own traditions and contexts. Translation studies today is growing and flourishing, and distinctive lines of translation research are developing. Moreover, some of the exciting thinking about translation is not necessarily coming from people who define themselves as working within the parameters of translation studies as such, but from people working in related fields such as

memory studies, comparative and world literature, philosophy, or globalization studies.

PSEUDOTRANSLATION

Research in the 1980s was dominated by the kind of historical investigation, that was also being conducted in the fields of gender and postcolonial studies, and by further theorizing around norms and other translational behaviours. Gideon Toury published an essay in 1985 that has since proved extremely influential, in which he developed the concept of **pseudotranslation**, that is a text presented as a translation but which is actually a piece of original writing. A frequently cited example of this practice is James Macpherson's eighteenth-century 'translation' of purportedly ancient texts by the Gaelic poet Ossian. The Ossianic poems were at first received with considerable enthusiasm, with Ossian being compared to Homer, for, as John Corbett puts it in his book on translation in Scotland, *Written in the Language of the Scottish Nation*, the poems 'satisfied the home-grown taste for patriotism, antiquarianism and, at least by analogy, classical authority: at last, Scotland had its own epic poet' (Corbett, 1999: 113). Then the existence of an ancient original was challenged, and Macpherson was branded a fraud. After his death in 1796, however, a Scottish committee was set up to investigate the case and concluded that although they may not have been 'original' poems as such, nevertheless Macpherson had drawn upon traditional materials that he had amassed during his travels in the Highlands. What is interesting is that the Ossianic poems have had a major influence on several European literatures, including German, Italian, Polish and Greek to name but four, even though Macpherson does not feature at all in the English literary canon. Murray Pittock regards this exclusion as being politically rather than aesthetically motivated (Pittock, 1995) and it is the case that although the Ossianic poems struck a chord with Romantic nationalism across Europe, this did not happen in the English context at that historical moment. Whatever the verdict on Macpherson, the Ossianic poems provide a fascinating case study of pseudotranslation, reinforcing Toury's argument that the identity of a pseudotranslation

as a translation depends on the conventions operating in the target system. From that essay an entire line of research into forms of textual practice that involves translation in some way or another has developed, most notably focusing on explorations of self-translation and of the often very fuzzy boundaries in an individual writer's opus between so called 'original' writing and 'translation'. It is also the case that, as Andre Lefevere points out, the role played by editors in shaping texts for different generations of readers can also be viewed as a form of rewriting, since editors, like translators cut, annotate, rephrase and emend texts in diverse ways that readers may not be aware of at all (Lefevere, 1992a).

THE CULTURAL TURN

In 1990, another significant collection of papers appeared, this time deriving from a large-scale conference at the University of Warwick, jointly organized by the departments of Comparative Literature and Philosophy. Edited by Susan Bassnett and Andre Lefevere and entitled *Translation, History and Culture*, it is generally considered to have initiated what has come to be termed 'the cultural turn' in translation studies. The preface set out a number of key points starting with the fact that translation as an activity is always doubly contextualized since the text has a position in two cultures. Translation is understood as 'one of the many forms in which works of literature are "rewritten", and is one of many "rewritings"' (Bassnett and Lefevere, 1990: 10). Other forms of rewriting involve editing, anthologizing, compiling, abridging and a host of other writerly activities, not to mention film and performance versions of written texts, all of which exercise some form of power over a source text. Perhaps most crucially, the authors make the point that translation can never be divorced from its dual context:

> What the development of Translation Studies shows is that translation, like all (re)writings is never innocent. There is always a context in which the translation takes place, always a history from which a text emerges and into which a text is transposed.
>
> (Bassnett and Lefevere, 1990: 11)

Contextual knowledge of both source and target systems was therefore deemed to be as important as linguistic competence, possibly even more so. It is obvious that inadequate linguistic competence will result in bad translations, as we have all so often discovered when reading incompetently translated menus or tourist brochures when travelling, yet it is less widely understood that without adequate contextual knowledge, translation can also fail badly. Aesthetic criteria change over time, sometimes very rapidly; we need only think of how dominant rhyme schemes have varied at particular moments in the past, rising and falling in importance, and how criteria of good taste have determined not only what writers have produced, but also what translations have been admissible. In her book on French translations of *Hamlet*, Romy Heylen tracks the (today) astonishing aesthetic shifts through two centuries of translation of Shakespeare's play, beginning with Voltaire's famous attack on Shakespeare in a letter of 1776 when he referred to the English playwright, whose star was in the ascendant in Europe at the time, as 'a monster', 'a barbaric mountebank' who had created just 'a few pearls in "an enormous dunghill"' (Heylen, 1993: 27–8). Case studies such as Heylen's reveal changing patterns of taste in the reception of texts across cultures; without an understanding of those changing patterns the temptation to rush into crude negative evaluation is strong. Discussing the popular translation by Jean-François Ducis that premiered in 1776, Heylen points out that he chose to subject himself entirely to the conventions expected of him by his French public. She quotes from a letter by Ducis to Garrick, in which he apologized to the great English actor for the changes he felt he had been forced to make by the constraints imposed by contemporary French theatre conventions. Ducis explains that elements of Shakespeare's play such as the Ghost, the Players, the onstage deaths were inadmissible on the French stage, hence 'I was forced, in a way, to create a new play. I just tried to make an interesting character of the parricidal queen and above all to depict the pure and melancholic Hamlet as a model of filial tenderness' (Ducis, cited in Heylen, 1993: 29).

The dilemma that an informed translator faces, therefore, is how to be aware of the dominant norms operating in both

contexts, aware of the expectations of the receiving public of the source text before taking whatever decisions may be deemed necessary to ensure that the translation is accepted in the target culture. In their insistence on the importance of that dual contextual recognition, Bassnett and Lefevere argued that the task of translation studies itself had begun to change, moving on from the earlier formalist approach, and turning instead to larger issues of convention, context and history. The object of study had been redefined, so that what was now seen as central in translation studies was the analysis of texts embedded in their dual networks of both source and target cultures. The demise of the notion of equivalence as sameness, and recognition of the fact that literary conventions change continuously, led to a shift of emphasis away from evaluating translations in terms of 'faithfulness', with greater attention now being paid to the relative function of a text in its two contexts. Translation studies, they claimed, had both utilized linguistic approaches and then moved beyond them into a new phase.

CONSTRUCTING CULTURES

In his essay in that same volume, 'Translation: Its Genealogy in the West', Lefevere raised issues that he would develop shortly afterwards in his monograph, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame.* His argument was that far from being a marginal literary activity, translation was a primary instrument through which one culture both learns about another, but at the same time constructs its image of that other culture. Translation is by its very definition, a form of textual manipulation in that it involves the rewriting of a text written in one language for a new set of readers in another language with different expectations. He cites a number of examples, including the problem faced by Western translators of a poem by the Arabic poet, Labid Ibn Rabiah in which there is a reference to camel dung. The English nineteenth-century translator dealt with the problem by omitting all such references, just as Sir William Jones had declined to translate references to the fact that the lovelorn heroine of the Sanskrit play, *Sacuntala* is described as sweating

profusely. When Jones' version was published in 1789, any hint of what to English readers might seem an unseemly bodily function for a lady was missing, although, for readers of the original, sweat was seen as a tangible sign of sexual arousal and was perfectly acceptable. Discussing Jones' translation, Harish Trivedi comments that:

> his prim and proleptically Victorian censorship neatly points up the common translatorial temptation to erase much that is culturally specific, to sanitize much that is comparatively odorous.
>
> (Bassnett and Trivedi, 1999: 7)

Lefevere pointed out that the German translator of Labid, in his endeavour to retain the references to camel dung, had tried to draw parallels with the dung heaps of wealthy Bavarian peasants. Both the English and German translations underline the problem faced by translators of how to translate signs of cultural difference and how to meet the expectations of the target audience. Recognizing the crucial importance of elements in a text that go beyond the linguistic, Lefevere states that:

> Language is not the problem. Ideology and poetics are, as are cultural elements that are not immediately clear, or seen as completely 'misplaced' in what would be the target culture version of the text to be translated.
>
> (Lefevere, 1990: 26)

In his book, Lefevere expands this point and devotes an entire chapter to the translation of the Arabic poetic form, the *qasida*. He points out that non-European poetic forms such as the Japanese haiku have found their way into Western literatures, while the *qasida*, despite its importance in Arabic literatures, has not. Seeking an explanation for this absence he concludes that the fault does not lie with the translators, whom he terms 'rewriters', nor with the incompatibility of two poetic conventions but rests rather with the low prestige of Islamic culture generally in Europe and the Americas. This leads to the absence of any serious desire to get to know Islamic culture more generally, unless

viewed through a lens that compares Arabic writing with the dominant Western trends. He also draws attention to the wide divergence in universes of discourse between the two, which has led translators to smuggle wordy explanations into their texts or to rely heavily on explanatory footnotes, thereby turning the reading experience into something more scholarly and pedantic than aesthetic.

TRANSLATION STUDIES AND INTERDISCIPLINARITY

The cultural turn in translation studies started at around the same time that a cultural turn was taking place in other fields within the humanities. Today, we are familiar with cultural history, cultural geography, cultural anthropology, socio-cultural linguistics, globalization studies and many others, and none of these now appear radical or subversive. These broad tendencies to pay greater attention to cultural factors have also led to increased contact between disciplines, hence we find references to a host of 'turns' in translation studies, such as a sociological turn, an inward turn or a performance turn, among others. Translation studies has been proclaimed as a discipline in its own right, a view supported by the proliferation around the world of journals, monographs, university degree courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, international conferences and research projects. Viewed from this perspective, the significance of translation studies has risen astronomically since it first appeared on the international scene in the 1970s, and a variety of diversified approaches to translation has come into being. Inevitably, there have been challenges to the early thinking around translation proposed by the Leuven group, though in 2011 the Chinese translation scholar, Chang Nam Fung published an essay offering an assessment of the successes and challenges to polysystems theory over the previous 30 years (Chang, 2008) and concluded by calling for greater integration and dialogue between researchers in the field. Significantly, he drew attention to the fact that theories also emerge from specific cultural contexts at specific times, and are designed with a particular cultural purpose in

mind, hence the impossibility of a universally acceptable approach.

The recent rapid expansion of world literature has again raised the importance of understanding the poetics of translation in different literary systems. As Lawrence Venuti puts it, in an essay on translation studies and world literature, for most readers, world literature is constituted by translation, and so in order to understand the impact of translation in the creation of world literature, 'we need to examine the canons developed by translation patterns within receiving situations as well as the interpretations that translations inscribe within the source texts' (Venuti, 2013: 208). Here Venuti is effectively building on Lefevere's argument that the original, for most readers is a text brought to them via translation, a point to which he returns repeatedly. Lefevere developed his theory of rewriting from his earlier theory of 'refraction', defining it as a process of textual re-envisioning (Lefevere, 2000 [1982]). A writer's work is always refracted, in Lefevere's figurative use of the word, through a certain spectrum, it is received and interpreted against a particular background and in the case of a work that has moved across a linguistic frontier, the refractions will be multiplied. What distinguishes 'refractions', according to Lefevere, is that they represent different interpretations of a work, interpretations that may be widely divergent from their starting point:

> A writer's work gains exposure and achieves influence mainly through 'misunderstandings and misconceptions' or, to use a more neutral term, refractions. Writers and their work are always understood and conceived against a certain background or, if you will, are refracted through a certain spectrum, just as their work itself can refract previous works through a certain spectrum.
>
> (Lefevere, 2000 [1982]: 234)

The study of translation should then incorporate examination of the movement of translated texts, since the trajectory a text pursues can tell us a great deal not only about the culture from which it emanated, but also about the culture into which it is received and, significantly, about the agency of the translator in

sending the text off on its journey to new readers. The growth of the study of world literature is an important development in this regard, and seems set to highlight further the central role of translation in literary transmission.

Translation studies has certainly arrived as an academic field in the twenty-first century, characterized by increasing diversification of methods and theories. But whatever the approach to translation, still, the basic questions remain before us: why are certain texts translated and not others? What are the factors, individual and societal that condition translation? Can we ever predict how a translation will function in the target culture? What are the reasons for the success or failure of translations? How can we understand the agency of the translator? How long will it take before the importance of translation in literary histories is finally recognized? Are there indeed boundaries between 'translation' and 'original writing' or are such categories ideologically determined? These, and many other, questions continue to excite our curiosity and arouse debate.

2

POSTCOLONIAL TRANSLATION

LANGUAGE AS INSTRUMENT OF POWER

As translation studies developed, so too did another field of research that also challenged literary, linguistic and cultural orthodoxies – postcolonialism, although for a long time the two did not converge. Interestingly, despite the centrality of language issues in postcolonial thought, relatively little attention has been paid to the significance of translation in a postcolonial context by English-language scholarship. This absence reflects a persistent belief in the hegemony of English, which, by the twentieth century has acquired global importance, so much so that even some of those scholars who now consider themselves as radical postcolonial thinkers still subscribe to the traditional English-language view that translation is of little significance. Hence although the importance of language as an issue within postcolonialism is often emphasized, there is little reference to the role played by translation. For example, the editors of the pioneering collection of essays, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (1989) barely mention translation,

although they stress the significance of language as central to postcolonial thought:

> The crucial function of language as a medium of power demands that post-colonial writing define itself by seizing the language of the centre and re-placing it in a discourse fully adapted to the colonized place.
> (Ashcroft et al, 1989:38)

It is the case with this book, as with numerous otherwise excellent works on postcolonial theory and practice, that the very word 'translation' does not even appear in the index. Significantly though, the editors modified this lacuna slightly in their second edition in 2002, acknowledging the growing importance of translation between what they refer to as local and world languages. Beyond the Anglo-American sphere however, others, notably those writers who know what it means to have to operate between more than one language, have taken a different view. They have also questioned the universal applicability of Western models, recognizing, as Azade Seyhan warns, that without due recognition of translation, cultural differences and specificities will be lost. Seyhan counsels against the tendency to read transnational diasporic literatures only through English (Seyhan, 2001). It is not enough to highlight the politics of language suppression as practised within colonial contexts, indeed, it is important to acknowledge the fundamental role played by translation in the diffusion of writing from around the world. Nevertheless, it is important also to note how postcolonial writers from many different contexts have chosen to adapt the colonizers' language in all kinds of innovative ways, effectively 'rewriting' English, French and Portuguese poetry and prose.

ALTERNATIVE NOTIONS OF ORIGINALITY

Ganesh Devy has pointed out that Western notions of originality along with Western aesthetic categories more generally simply do not apply to the long-established multilingual Indian context. He contrasts the short time-span of little more than 200 years during which English acquired pre-eminence in India, with that of

Tamil, India's oldest literary language that has had a continuous history of some 3,000 years, and then accuses Western scholarship of devaluing translation. Devy refers to the biblical myth of Babel, which relates how God punished the descendants of Noah for daring to challenge his authority by building a great tower that would stretch right up to heaven. The builders of the tower all spoke a single language, but God scattered them across the earth and confused all their languages, to make sure that they could never again unite against him. The Tower of Babel is therefore a symbol of lost unity and of a fall from God's grace. Where once human beings shared a common language, after the fall of the Tower of Babel they were doomed to exist in a perpetual state of linguistic uncertainty. Devy takes this a stage further, arguing that this myth has implications for how translation is perceived in the West:

> Within the context of Western metaphysics, translation is an exile, a fall from the origin; and the mythical exile is a post-Babel crisis consequent upon the moment of the fragmentation of a pure, original, divinely authorised language into a series of different languages that were then diffused throughout the world. Given this metaphysical precondition of Western aesthetics, it is not surprising that literary translations are not accorded the same status as *original* works. Western literary criticism implies that translation carries with it a burden of guilt because it comes into being *after* the original, and this temporal subsequentiality is held as proof of the diminution of its literary authenticity.
> (Devy, 1998: 152)

Although Devy can be accused of generalizing about the monolingualism of all Western cultures, nevertheless the point he is seeking to make is important. For if translation in the West is haunted by ontological uncertainty, and if there is oversensitivity to the idea of translation as an act of importation of the foreign into a culture that values its native traditions above anything from outside, this attitude, combined with what he identifies as a metaphysics of guilt and a philosophy of individualism all serve to 'render European literary historiography incapable of grasping

the origins of literary traditions' (Devy, 1998: 152). He points out that translation is what he terms a revitalization of the original in another time and space, hence the problems of both translation and literary history are 'the problems of the relationship between origins and subsequentiality' (Devy, 1998: 156). What Devy suggests is that the widely-held Anglo-American notion of the superiority of the original against the inferiority of translation – an issue that had finally been challenged by the Leuven group – was by no means a universally accepted position, but was rather another manifestation of a monolingual colonialist mentality. He also shows how incompatible Western concepts of originality are with non-Western philosophies.

BILINGUALISM AS PRODUCT OF COLONIALISM

Raja Rao, in the preface to his novel *Kanthapura*, wrote tellingly about the difficulties of operating between languages and of the problems of identity that come with linguistic uncertainty. Rao pointed out that, as an Indian, he had had to write in a language, English, that was, and yet was not, his own. English, he suggested, was the language of his intellectual make-up, since it was the language in which he had been educated, but it was not the pivot of his emotional and psychological make-up:

> We are all instinctively bilingual, many of us writing in our own language and English. We cannot write like the English. We should not. We cannot write only as Indians.
>
> (Rao, 1938: vii)

Rao here pinpoints the classic dilemma of the writer educated formally in the language of the hegemonic power, while at the same time functioning in other areas of his or her life in another language. Writers like Rao can neither write like the English, nor can they write only as Indians, since they have been trained to occupy a kind of liminal space, never quite comfortable in either. But the question of language and education goes far beyond the linguistic dimension alone. Sujit Mukherjee has demonstrated how far-reaching the implications of a widely diffused colonial

education system could be. In *Towards a Literary History of India* (1975), Mukherjee shows how the study of English literature served as a template in Indian universities for the study of modern Indian languages, with forms and trends in Indian writing being made to fit into models of periodization, categorization and nomenclature suited only to English. Mukherjee highlights the absurdity of trying to fit the study of Indian literatures into an alien framework, but emphasizes the extent of its colonizing impact on literary study in India more generally, with some Indian literary scholars docilely following the imported model: 'That this entire strategy belongs to a uni-language literary culture like that of England's has never deterred our literary historians from applying it wholesale to our multi-lingual literary culture' (Mukherjee, 1975: 18). The imposition of one language and its cultural apparatus for the study of literature onto another without regard for cultural difference forces bilingual or multilingual writers into a crisis of identity. This crisis is beautifully articulated in an autobiographical essay by the African writer, Ngugi wa Thiong'o where he remarks that he has 'always lived in translation' (Ngugi, 2009: 18). He relates how his mother tongue was Gikuyu and that as a child he learned to read and write in that language. Later, he added Kiswahili and English, but it was with that third language that problems began:

> I soon came to realize that my relation to English was based on a coercive system of rewards and terror. I was rewarded with praise and distinction when I did well in English, spoken and written, but punished and humiliated when I was caught speaking Gikuyu in the school compound. I have come to learn that the same was done to Welsh kids who were made to carry a placard, 'Welsh Not' when they were caught speaking Welsh in the school compound.
>
> (Ngugi, 2009: 18)

Ngugi traces his own writing career in terms of **self-translation.** He relates how he would listen in church to the preacher reading passages from the Bible in Gikuyu, which he would be following in an English Bible. Later, when he started to write novels he continued the same practice, writing in one language with the

other running through his head, so that writing in English became what he terms a literary act of mental translation. When he took the decision in 1978 to abandon English and write a novel in Gikuyu, he experienced this as a kind of liberation. That novel, *Caitaani muthara-ini*, written in prison on toilet paper was published in 1980. It was then published in English, by Heinemann in 1982 as *Devil on the Cross*, translated by the author.

STRATEGIES TO LIBERATE TRANSLATION

Ngugi recounts how he tried to shape his translation in such a way that readers would be made aware of the existence of the African source language through his **manipulation** of English. Some years later he translated another of his own novels, although this time his approach was quite different. He explains how he came to find himself writing and rewriting, translating and retranslating various drafts, so that he became engaged in a continuous dialogue between Gikuyu and English. This time, however, he did not want to highlight the presence of the source language in his translation:

> My one determination was that I would not try to make the source language intrude overtly in the target language. I was no longer interested in trying to make readers feel they were reading a text that had been written in another language. If they wanted to authenticate the original language of its composition, they could go to the Gikuyu original.
>
> (Ngugi, 2009: 20)

Ngugi's brief essay is important because not only does it provide a sketch of the dilemma faced by multilingual writers in a colonial context, but it also shows how far he has moved in effectively decolonizing his own writing practice. Writers seeking to develop postcolonial strategies from the 1960s onwards had at first struggled with different ways of highlighting multilingualism and rejecting the dominance of English. Debates raged over how to signal the presence of a precursive orality in a written text: whether words in a minority language should be left in a

European-language narrative with or without glosses or notes, whether writers should attempt to break into the international market through established English-language publishers, or whether this might be seen as surrendering to the power of global publishing and marketing systems, whether writers should deliberately seek to subvert the colonial language and refashion it in new consciously postcolonial ways. Ngugi's famous *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (1986) was a kind of manifesto for African writers who wanted to break away from the European literary mainstream. The key lay in reasserting the power of African languages with their history of oral tradition. Language, he argued, carries the values of a people, so that if a language is suppressed, it is the most potent symbol of wider oppression. Linguistic domination should therefore be resisted through a revolutionary language strategy, because failure to engage in resistance would ensure 'the domination of a people's language by the languages of the colonizing nations', and that in turn would result in 'the domination of the mental universe of the colonized' (Ngugi, 1986: 16). Ngugi chose to reject the language of the colonizer, English, opting instead to write in Gikuyu, but later recognizing that he needed also to be translated into English in order to reach a broader international community of readers. The distinction is significant, for while at one stage Ngugi was explicitly rejecting English as his primary creative language, he later came to see translation into English as a way of asserting the primary status of Gikuyu in his writing career.

Another strategy of resistance is that followed by the Ivory Coast writer, Ahmadou Kourouma, who uses both French and Malinke. Like Ngugi, Kourouma tries to integrate the two languages in such a way as to break through what he perceives as stylistic rigidities in French in order to express the double linguistic consciousness in which he operates on a daily basis. He explains how he works, highlighting the various stages of creativity involved in the movement between languages:

> I thought in Malinke and wrote in French by taking what I considered a natural liberty with the classical language. What had I done? Simply given free rein to my temperament by distorting a classical language

> that is too rigid, so that my thoughts can find expression in it. I have therefore translated Malinke into French by breaking the French in order to find and restore an African rhythm.
>
> (Kourouma, 1997, cited in Gyasi, 2006: 108)

Kourouma's use of liberationist terminology is noteworthy here. He takes what he considers to be a 'natural liberty' with the colonial language, in much the same way as Ngugi says he tried to shape his translation to expose signs of the original Gikuyu when translating his first Gikuyu novel into English. Later, however, Ngugi explains how he changed his mind, because he had ceased to want to remind readers that they were reading a text originally created in another language, and hence he no longer felt the need to adopt a strategy of foreignization. This is a very interesting development, a sign that there has been a major shift of perspective in postcolonial attitudes towards translation. Ngugi appears to be taking up the utopian notion of radical bilingualism proposed by Samia Mehrez, who called for a new literary space for bilingual postcolonial writers, a space where linguistic and cultural hierarchies could be subverted and where no single language would dominate (Mehrez, 1991).

TRANSLATION AS VIOLENCE

Translation theorists such as Lawrence Venuti, Tejaswini Niranjana and Eric Cheyfitz have all, in different ways, highlighted the violence inherent in the act of translation where one culture exerts dominance over another, and Bassnett and Lefevere have argued that translation can never be innocent, since there are always hierarchies between languages and cultures. Niranjana, in her book *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism and the Colonial Context* (1992), proposed that translation was an effective instrument of colonialism, part of the technological apparatus that ensured the establishment of complex political, social, aesthetic and pedagogical systems in the colonized territories. This is the same theme that Eric Cheyfitz took up in his study, *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from* The Tempest *to* Tarzan (1991). Cheyfitz examines some of the ways in which

European colonizers obtained land rights through dubious translation practices. In his analysis of a seventeenth-century pamphlet, *A True Declaration of the Colonie in Virginie*, he explains how documentation was drawn up that recognized that a local Algonquian chief, Paspehay, was considered to have ownership of land for which he was then given a crown and sceptre in exchange. Through this nomination of Paspehay as 'king' (a concept alien to the Algonquian) the acquirers of the land that his people used but did not 'own' (given that the terminology of land ownership did not exist in Algonquian), were able to claim that their acquisition had full legality. Cheyfitz points out that legal repercussions of this and similar actions have continued into our own times. The point he and Niranjana make so strongly is that a substantial part of the colonial enterprise involved translation.

Sabine Fenton and Paul Moon have analysed one of the most well-known cases of exploitative translation, the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi between the British and more than 500 Maori chiefs in New Zealand. The treaty was regarded for some time as a model of cooperation between peoples, but dispute over the accuracy and viability of the translated document led to decades of bitterness and ultimately to legal challenges. The treaty was retranslated in 1869 and then in 1975 the Waitangi Tribunal was set up to deal with grievances arising from the original translated document. Fenton and Moon have examined the role played by Henry Williams, an Anglican missionary with a knowledge of Maori who produced the 1840 translation, concluding that Williams' version reflected the fact that he was a product of his time, his religion and the prevailing ideology. As with the case cited by Cheyfitz, the Waitangi Treaty involved the translation of mutually incompatible systems of thought, hence the problems faced by Williams were cultural inequalities not merely the absence of linguistic equivalents. Fenton and Moon conclude that when the power disparities between cultures are too great, culture becomes untranslatable:

> The translation of the Treaty of Waitangi from English, the dominant culture, into Maori, the indigenous culture, is a case in point. The untranslatability of culture of which Homi Bhabha (1994) speaks is

> demonstrated here in its most dramatic form: the merely semantic transfer resulting in the disempowerment of an indigenous nation.
>
> (Fenton and Moon, 2002: 41–2)

Language, the heart in the body of culture, reflects and articulates the values of its culture, but when a translator makes assumptions about its universality, problems arise. The early twentieth-century linguist Benjamin Lee Whorf in a manuscript written sometime in the 1930s compared Western and Hopi metaphysics and relationships to space and time, protesting that he found it 'gratuitous' that his fellow Americans should assume that their conceptualizing of time and space should be the only one universally accepted. Having spent years studying the Hopi language, he concluded that it contained no words, grammatical forms, constructions or expressions that referred directly to time as the West conceives of it, with distinctions made between past, present and future. And yet, this absence did not affect the sophistication of Hopi reasoning, for 'the Hopi language is capable of accounting for and describing correctly, in a pragmatic or operational sense, all observable phenomena of the universe' (Whorf, 1956: 58). Whorf recognized the absurdity of universal assumptions of meaning, recognizing that in any translation process meaning would have to be negotiated. It is in that process of negotiation that the inequalities of power relationships between cultures comes to the fore.

Insistence on a single world view by a dominant culture leads inevitably to dissension and, in Lawrence Venuti's words, to a brutal exercise of power:

> The violence of translation resides in its very purpose and activity: the reconstitution of the foreign text in accordance with values, beliefs and representations that pre-exist it in the target language, always configured in hierarchies of dominance and marginality, always determining the production, circulation, and reception of texts. Translation is the forcible replacement of the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text with a text that will be intelligible to the target language reader.
>
> (Venuti, 1992: 209)

FOREIGNIZATION AND DOMESTICATION STRATEGIES

Venuti's concern for the problem of unequal power relations between cultures led him to formulate the concepts of foreignization and domestication (sometimes referred to as 'acculturation') as opposing translation strategies, which have had great international appeal. Like Lefevere, Venuti acknowledges that translations wield great power both in the construction of national identities at home and in the construction of images of other cultures. He acknowledges the role of the translator as agent, and poses the basic practical question a translator may ask, which is how to set about translating in a way that does not wreak violence on the source text and its culture. Seeking to answer this question, he went back to a lecture given by Friedrich Schleiermacher in Berlin in 1813 that posited two alternative methods for translating: either to bring the text to the reader, or to take the reader to the text. Schleiermacher had deployed the metaphor of transplantation, used also by the English Romantic poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley, to argue that a foreignization translation strategy can enrich a language. German, he believed, would become richer through its respect for all things foreign, a respect that would be articulated through translation by retaining signs of the otherness of the original. Schleiermacher pointed out that the problem with the first method is that the translator has to endeavour to make the translated text sound as though it has been written originally in the target language, with the consequent blurring of any signs of otherness, an approach he condemned as being closer to what he termed 'imitation' than to translation. He suggested that a better approach would be to inscribe signs of the original's foreignness in the translation itself, thereby stretching the limits of the target or receiving language, as it incorporated traces of the language used by the original author.

It is worth noting that eighteenth-century German translators of classical texts, notably the great Johann Heinrich Voss who introduced the hexameter into German, did indeed stretch the limits of their own language and literature. Schleiermacher was well aware of the impetus given to German Romanticism by

translators who had eschewed the French style of domesticating everything and believed that German was a strong enough language to absorb and benefit from the foreign. Johann Gottfried Herder, commenting on the French preference for domestication as opposed to the German willingness to embrace the foreign, saw it as an example of excessive French pride. Homer, he complained had been made to 'enter France as a captive and dress according to their fashion, so as not to offend their eyes'. (Herder in Lefevere, 1992a: 74)

Venuti reconsidered Schleiermacher's bipartite distinction in a twentieth-century context, making out a case for foreignizing translation on ideological rather than purely aesthetic grounds, and suggesting that a rejection of the dominant domesticating translation practice could become a strategic intervention that would challenge the hegemony of English. Domesticating translation relies on the translator's ability to create a work that reads as fluently as if it had been written originally in the target language, and such fluency is, in Venuti's eyes, a discursive strategy that is both ethnocentrically violent and deceptive, in that it conceals the violence through the illusion of transparency. As Venuti developed his ideas about foreignization and domestication, he stressed the fact that certain cultures, most notably the Anglo-American, favoured the domestication model. Later in this book, we shall return to this complex issue, when discussing certain types of text, such as advertising or news reporting where domestication is necessarily the most appropriate strategy. Here it will suffice to note that Venuti's distinction between foreignization and domestication in contexts where power relations are unequal has been extremely useful as a way of highlighting the importance of translation as an instrument of cultural exchange.

CONSTRUCTING AN IMAGE OF A CULTURE THROUGH TRANSLATION

In 1913 Rabindranath Tagore became the first Indian, indeed, the first Asian, writer to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. Tagore is an interesting case of a writer who, after

considerable success in Bengali, suddenly erupted onto the international stage with his own translation of an anthology of poems, *Gitanjali: Song Offerings*. W.B. Yeats wrote an introduction to the book, praising its childlike innocence and mystical power, and Tagore enjoyed cult status in the English-speaking world for some three decades, through the years of the First World War, the Great Depression and the troubled 1930s. During those years, Tagore came to be seen as representative of the wisdom of the East, a kind of visionary more in touch with nature and the latent powers of the universe than any Western writer. In Bengal, he had been seen as an avant-garde writer, whereas in the West he was regarded as a mystic. Mahasweta Sengupta has examined the contrast between Tagore in Bengali and Tagore in English, arguing that his popularity in the West in the first decades of the twentieth century was based not on any intellectual appreciation of his work, but on 'the emotional association of the East as an enigma, where saints and prophets brought deliverance to ordinary people' (Sengupta, 1990: 62). The new harsher climate of the Second World War and its aftermath brought about major aesthetic changes, and the vogue for Eastern mysticism died out. Tagore's work ceased to appeal to European readers, although he continued to write in Bengali, and in India he was perceived as both an innovator and as a serious social critic.

What makes the case of Tagore distinctive is that his cult status came about as a result of his own translations of his poetry. He acknowledged that he had to rewrite his Bengali originals to accord with English taste, and Sengupta notes how in *Gitanjali* and another five collections of poems in the years between 1912 and 1921 when his reputation was at its highest, he deliberately included poems where the spiritual and the devotional predominated over any other themes; in other words, he structured his material to suit the demands of his target readership. Moreover, being unfamiliar with the radical poetic experiments of contemporary poets writing in English, he created a highly conservative form of verse, harking back to the high Romanticism of the still-popular Victorian and Edwardian poets. Tagore was successful not because of the quality of his poetry or because of his innovative technique, but because what he produced pandered to

the Western myth about the mystical gentle childlike East, a myth that was eagerly consumed through the years of devastation and misery during and after the First World War. Tagore's self-translations resulted in a kind of prose-poetry with Biblical overtones, highly readable despite his use of archaisms and his rather stilted language, a poetry structured through short sentences with strong images. This led to his English translations being easily translatable into other European languages, hence reinforcing his status and his image in Western cultures, as these lines suggest:

> I know not how thou singest, my master! I ever listen in silent amazement. The light of thy music illumines the world. The life breath of thy music runs from sky to sky.
>
> (Tagore, 2000: 14)

Sengupta reflects on how Tagore assisted in the creation of his English-language persona, contrasting it with his more radical Bengali persona, and regards this strategy as 'submission to the hegemonic power of "images" created and nurtured by the target culture as the authentic representation of the Other' (Sengupta, 1990: 172).

CHALLENGING EUROPE AS THE ORIGINAL

As postcolonial scholarship has shown, and continues to show, a major source of struggle for Indian, African and Caribbean writers has been the problem of linguistic hegemony. The very idea of 'writing back' implies a conscious challenge to a dominant power: emergent literatures reclaim colonial languages, reshaping their own versions of those languages and acknowledging the simultaneous presence of other, indigenous languages. Implicit here, however, is the idea of the colony *as* a translation. For if the colonizing power is the source, the original from which the colony derives, then that colony is de facto a version of the original, a copy, a translation. And the question then becomes how to break the circle that deems a translation to be inferior to its original.

The answer lies in reformulating the concept of translation itself, and some of the most radical thinking about the

relationship between translation and original has come from the Spanish and Portuguese-speaking countries of Central and South America, countries that established their own independent status in the nineteenth century, often after years of bitter conflict. One of the best-known pieces of writing about translation is an essay by the Mexican Nobel Laureate, Octavio Paz, 'Translation: Literature and Letters' that appeared in 1971. A poet himself, Paz focuses on the translation of poetry, acknowledging first the impossibility of the complete recreation of an original text in the target language. He sees translation as a creative act, dismissing literal translation, which he refers to as *servile* ('servile' in Spanish) and arguing that although the original never reappears in exactly the same way in the new language, it is always present in the translation. The paradox for Paz is that while translation seeks to overcome difference between language, what it actually does is to highlight difference, so that through translation 'we become aware that our neighbours do not speak or think as we do' (Paz, 1992 [1971]:154). He conceives of language as a system of movable signs, with the task of the poet being to take those signs and fix them into the ideal form of the poem. The words of the poem become fixed and immovable as the poem takes shape, since to change them would be to destroy the poem itself.

This then implies that the task of the translator is the inverse of the poet's task: the translator starts with the fixed language of the poem, a language that Paz terms 'congealed', yet still very much alive. The translator is not seeking to construct an unmovable text from the mobile raw material which is the poet's language: 'instead, he is dismantling the elements of the text, freeing the signs into circulation, then returning them to language' (Paz, 1992 [1971]: 159). What happens in the translation of a poem is therefore parallel to its creation, only in reverse; the poet discovers the right words and shapes a poem, then the translator reads those words, rethinks the poem and rewrites it in a new language, having freed the signs and put them back into circulation somewhere else. 'Translation and creation are twin processes', Paz declared, going on to suggest that the history of European poetry is a dual history of both translation and creation, two inverse parallel processes that are often indistinguishable one

from another. The greatest creative periods of Western poetry, Paz argues, 'from its origins in Provence to our own day, have been preceded or accompanied by intercrossings between different poetic traditions' (Paz, 1992 [1971]: 160).

Paz's liberationist theory of poetic translation, which sees the translator as a creator in his or her own right whose task is to free the fixed signs of the original poem into circulation in another language, is echoed in the writings of Jorge Luis Borges, a plurilingual writer with strong views about translation. 'No problem is as consubstantial to literature as the one posed by translation' is the opening statement of his wittily ironic essay on translation, 'The Homeric Versions' (Borges 2002 [1992]: 15), and he goes on from there to attack the absurdity of perceiving translations as inferior to original writing. He rejects the notion of a definitive text, one that might lay claim to greater status than a rewriting, stating that the notion of a definitive text corresponds only to religion or fatigue and dismisses as mere superstition the idea that a translation is inferior to an original. Borges, like Paz, viewed translation as form of creative rewriting, an act designed to ensure the continuation of a writer such as Homer, who without translation would have vanished into oblivion once the language in which he composed his works ceased to exist in its living form.

Writers from across South America have long challenged European literary hegemony, seeking to rewrite or subvert canonical European models in their own way. The tendency has not been to view translation as a means of perpetuating the dominance of the colonizer's language, nor have writers rejected Spanish or Portuguese in favour of indigenous languages. Rather there have been endeavours to arrive at an integrated literary production, and the principal dilemma has been working out how to rewrite European literatures in a genuinely non-European way. The most striking solution proposed has come from Brazil, and has been termed 'the cannibalistic approach', because of the centrality of a particular episode in Brazilian history. The origins of this approach date back to the sixteenth century, when members of the Tupinamba tribe killed and ate a Portuguese missionary priest. This act, which sent shudders of horror through Europe, was in fact not perceived as an atrocity by the perpetrators, but was considered

part of the Tupi system of showing respect and admiration for persons esteemed noble or heroic, hence cannibalism in their context was an act of homage, through which the tribe felt able to devour the positive elements transmitted via sacrificial flesh. The Tupi literally devoured esteemed individuals, whereas the priest in question had been preaching a religion whose central mystery involves only virtual devouring, eating the flesh and drinking the blood of God. The clash between Christian and Tupinamba perceptions of the ritual devouring of sacred flesh can therefore be seen as one of the most extreme cases of cultural mistranslation ever recorded.

In the 1920s a group of Brazilian intellectuals came together in what they termed the *movimento antropófago* through which they sought to establish the parameters of a genuinely Brazilian culture. Their 'Anthropophagist Manifesto', by the Modernist poet, Oswalde de Andrade appeared in 1928 (translated into English, interestingly, as 'Cannibalist Manifesto' in 1991) and challenged the binary opposition of civilization versus barbarism, highlighting the dual history, indigenous and European, of contemporary Brazil. One of the most famous lines of this ironic, highly polemical and entertaining essay is the parody of Hamlet's line, here rendered as 'Tupi or not Tupi'. The objective of this kind of textual play is summed up very aptly by Edwin Gentzler in his book on translation and identity in the Americas:

> This replacement of European cultural icons with native symbols and fields of reference is characteristic of the cannibalist style, a devouring of Shakespeare and revitalization of *Hamlet* absorbed and transformed through the Brazilian experience.
>
> (Gentzler, 2008: 82)

The Anthropophagist ideology was revived with particular emphasis on translation in the 1960s, through the work of two brothers, Haroldo and Augusto de Campos. Both translated and wrote about translation, coining a range of new terms and metaphors with which to describe the creativity inherent in their postcolonial translation process. Translation could be seen as blood transfusion, as an act of patricide, as reinvention, as

disremembering, as vampirism, as transcreation. Haroldo de Campos coined new terms for his translations of particular texts: 'translumination' and 'transparadization' for Dante, 'transluciferation' for his translation of Goethe's *Faust*, 'transhelenization' for Homer, 'reimagination' for classical Chinese poetry. The principle behind the translation theory of the de Campos brothers was the absolute freedom of the translator to refashion the original in any way they chose, because they were free agents who were showing respect for the original through the act of translating. In an essay on translation as creation and criticism, first published in 1963, Haroldo de Campos stated:

> Any past which is an 'other' for us deserves to be negated. We could say that it deserves to be eaten, devoured. With this clarification and specification: the cannibal was a polemicist (from the Greek *polemos*, meaning struggle or combat) but he was also an 'anthologist'; he devoured only the enemies he considered strong, to take from them the marrow and protein to fortify and renew his own natural energies.
> (de Campos in Vieira, 1999: 103)

The cannibalistic theory of Brazil and the liberationalist theory of translation from Latin American writers more generally is evidence of the plurality of ways in which translation in a postcolonial context can be perceived. The vitality of the South American approaches is enhanced by a refusal to see translation in negative terms; for them it is neither a betrayal of a superior original, nor an instrument of hegemonic oppression, for the emphasis is not on the inequalities between linguistic and cultural systems, rather it is on asserting a right to an alternative conceptualization of the world, a right to independence from the past without a wholesale rejection of whatever might be utilizable from the past, but in a completely new framework.

CULTURAL TRANSLATION

Until recently, translation in postcolonial discourse has not involved the interlingual transfer of texts; instead translation has been used metaphorically to talk about a migrant or nomadic

space between cultures, where continuities are disrupted and identities are reformulated, made and unmade. Homi Bhabha has introduced the metaphor of translation in his essay, 'How Newness enters the World' in which he posits a theory of in-betweenness, involving 'a new international space of discontinuous historical realities' (Bhabha 1994: 217). He prefaces his essay with a quote from Walter Benjamin that highlights the transformative nature of translation, but then moves away from the transformative, as the Brazilians and Latin Americans have done, to focus on the ambivalence of translation. According to Bhabha, there is a contradiction at the heart of translation, since although the objective is to bring a text produced in one context into another, the very act of translating forces the translator to confront those aspects of a text that actively resist translation, in short, to engage with the untranslatable. Because difference is at the heart of translation, the task of translation is to negotiate in the highly-charged in-between space that, according to Bhabha, 'carries the burden of the meaning of culture' (Bhabha, 1994: 38). Bhabha takes up Benjamin's idea of the untranslatable resisting assimilation and applies it to what he presents as the new global reality of migrancy. For him, postcolonial migration is a translational phenomenon; it is a space in which meaning is constantly remade, the opposite of colonialism where the objective was to reproduce an original culture through the imposition of its social, political, aesthetic and ethical frameworks onto another culture altogether. Bhabha's newness is the newness of migrant or minority discourses, brought about by what he terms 'cultural translation', a newness that is liminal, hybrid and diverse. His use of the terminology of translation to describe encounters between cultures in a new kind of space where interlingual encounter is part of daily life led to the concept of cultural translation gaining ground rapidly through the 1990s, as a kind of rhetorical catch-all for processes of interpretation of the multiple sign systems across and between cultural borders in which numerous differentiating factors were at work.

Any survey of postcolonialism and translation has therefore to take account of a number of different strands that appear to have become twisted together in a complicated tangle of knots. There is

the metaphoric use of cultural translation, which predominates in Anglo-American postcolonial theory; there is the creative liberationist approach to interlingual translation of Brazilian and Latin American writers; and there is the emphasis on the unequal power relationships involved in translation that is highlighted by research in translation studies. What is needed now is for more 'translation' to take place between these different approaches. Some scholars with a foot in both camps, as it were, are concerned about what is perceived as a widening gap. Harish Trivedi, for example, has attacked the way in which some postcolonial writing uses the terminology of 'cultural translation', seeing this as the appropriation of a discourse of translation by monolinguals. He argues that what Bhabha means by translation is simply the condition of Western multiculturalism brought about by migration, and disapproves of a concept of translation that ignores the plurilingualism at the heart of all translation. He sees cultural translation as reinforcing the monolingualism that prevails in the Anglo-American universe of discourse, thereby marginalizing still further those like himself who operate in more than one language and are concerned about the hegemony of global English: 'Those of us still located on our home turf and in our own cultures and speaking our own languages can no longer be seen or heard' (Trivedi, 2007: 18). With bitter irony, Trivedi seems to be suggesting that cultural translation, as conceived of within postcolonial studies, is merely another manifestation of Anglo-American cultural and linguistic imperialism. Cultural translation, he suggests, has become a way of avoiding language issues altogether.

The American translation scholar Emily Apter, whose book, *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature* was inspired by her concerns about global communication difficulties in the wake of 9/11, argues that translation and global diplomacy have never before been so intertwined, and that as the West began its so-called War on Terror, translation now 'took on a special relevance as a matter of war and peace' (Apter, 2006: 3). She refers back to the frantic search for translators with knowledge of Arabic and Afghan languages immediately after 9/11, pointing out how this exposed the monolingualism of the United States government, noting also that this monolingualism 'as a strut of unilateralism and monocultural US foreign policy' had infuriated the rest of the world (Apter, 2006: 12). She argues that inability to understand other languages leads to intercultural incomprehension and to what she terms mistranslation.

In coining the term 'translation zone', Apter drew upon the influential idea of the 'contact zone' formulated by Mary Louise Pratt in relation to travel writing. The contact zone is a space of encounter between peoples in which discursive transformations occur as different groups endeavour to represent themselves to one another, a space that may be a site of violence or disruption, but which is nevertheless an enabling theoretical space where cultural difference and their imaginative possibilities can be explored. Apter takes this concept of the enabling space and applies it to translation. In her vision, the translation zone

> defines the epistemological interstices of politics, poetics, logic, cybernetics, linguistics, genetics, media and environment: its locomotion characterizes both psychic transference and the technology of information transfer.
>
> (Apter, 2006: 6)

The translation zone is a space that does not belong to any one nation, but is a zone of critical engagement 'that connects the "l" and "n" of transLation and transNation' (Apter 2006: 6). Translation in this context is both an act of love and of disruption, since it forces individuals out of their comfort zone of national space and mother tongue, compelling them to engage with otherness. Learning another language brings other ways of looking at the world, and recognizing that that which is untranslatable raises questions about what does or does not belong to any one language or culture. Translation therefore has both a personal and a political dimension and needs to be seen as the primary tool in a twenty-first century vision of the world that seeks to encompass multiple forms of communication with the objective of avoiding catastrophic conflicts arising from a failure to read the signs of other cultures. Apter's vision develops Bhabha's notion of cultural translation, returning interlingual exchange, or what Trivedi sees as translation proper, to centre stage.

Another American translation scholar concerned to bridge the gap between postcolonial theorizing and translation studies is Edwin Gentzler, in his book *Translation and Identity in the Americas* (2008). In his chapter on border writing and the Caribbean, Gentzler takes up Bhabha's terminology and argues that border spaces are highly creative, and he supports his argument with a string of thought-provoking questions:

> What is it like to think about a nation when one has no home? What is it like to think about translation when one has no native language? How is one's identity affected if one's homeland has been dissolved? What do the new hyphenated, compound identity markers such as African-American, Asian-American, or Amer-Indian describe? What do they exclude? Will new markers, maps and split terms accurately describe the conditions of the nomads, migrants, and exiles caught between borders and national definitions? Can one think about a culture in which there are no centers but only borders? How would such a situation change our definition of translation?
>
> (Gentzler, 2008: 145).

How indeed?

3

TRANSLATION AND GENDER

GRAMMATICAL GENDER

All languages differ from one another. As the linguist J.C. Catford pointed out in his book, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*, still an extremely useful introduction since its first publication in 1965, exact correspondence between languages is impossible because there are fundamental differences of phonology, grammar and lexis. People learning English, for example, are often initially encouraged by the relatively loose grammar, such as simple verb forms, no declensions or restricted use of the subjunctive mood, but then encounter the problem of the huge range of English lexical items. Writers using English skilfully will play with words, will use quasi-synonyms, will stretch the already very elastic language and will often use the ability of English to incorporate new vocabulary or to shift the meaning of words innovatively. Students of English quickly encounter what I call 'the killer preposition', that is, the English usage of prepositions to completely alter the meaning of a verb. If we take the verb 'to look', for example, its meaning can be radically altered by the addition of a preposition: look up, look up to, look round, look

after, look through, look for, look into, look down, look down on, look over. All these verbal phrases involve shifts of meaning and the student of English has to commit them all to memory.

For the English-speaker learning another language, the relative fluidity of English grammatical rules, when compared, say, to French, presents a different set of difficulties. There may be declensions to memorize, verb tables to learn and there may also be grammatical gender forms. For the beginner, grammatical gender can appear puzzling: why is the German word for 'girl' (*das Mäedchen*) neuter? Why are sentries in Italian (*sentinelle*) feminine? Why is 'day' (*le jour*) masculine in French? Why is 'thank you' in Portuguese *obregado* for men, *obregada* for women? For the speakers of a language in which gender does not exist as a grammatical feature but instead is related to the actual gender of living creatures, it can take some time to adjust to a linguistic system where there are both actual and grammatical gender markers. Articles and adjectives have to agree with the gender of nouns so that, for example, while in English the word for 'baby' is non-gender-specific, in Italian, for example, the sex of the baby is foregrounded by the noun ending: *bambino* if the child is male, *bambina* if female. In addition, Anglo-American feminism has challenged assumptions about gender implicit in some cases of English language usage. Hence, 'chairman' became 'chairperson' and then the more widely accepted, 'chair'; 'actress', one of the few remaining feminine versions of a noun (in the nineteenth century women poets were routinely referred to as 'poetesses') is becoming outmoded and being replaced by 'actor' for men and women. The use of the word 'men' to include all genders is disappearing, even in religious observance. But what happens when a translator has to move between a language with grammatical gender and one without?

Myriam Diaz-Diocaretz translated poetry by Adrienne Rich into Spanish, and in her book on translating feminist discourse, wrote an account of the difficulties she encountered as she moved from a language without grammatical gender into one that requires gender to be marked. This was particularly problematic, since as we have seen with the baby example above, English does not mark gender in certain cases, whereas Spanish requires the gender of a subject or object to be clearly signalled. Diaz-Diocaretz was

translating a lesbian poet whose love poems played with gender ambiguity, something that could not happen in Spanish because the structure of the language demanded that the gender of both subject and object be stated. The problem for the translator was therefore twofold: on the one hand, the ambiguities in the source text created by semantic indeterminacy were lost, while on the other hand, the translations appeared to highlight the lesbianism of the poet by the use of vocabulary that clarified the gender of speaker and addressee; and, as Diaz-Diocaretz pointed out, this distorted the reading of Rich's work, not least because in 1985 when the poems first appeared, Spanish attitudes to homosexuality were far more rigid than in North America (Diaz-Diocaretz, 1985). Diaz-Diocaretz's book highlights both the cultural problems inherent in translation, and the linguistic problems that arise because linguistic systems are always different from one another.

ANGLO-AMERICAN AND FRENCH FEMINISMS: A CASE OF SELECTIVE TRANSLATION

In the 1970s, as translation studies was wrestling in relative isolation from other fields in the humanities with the problems of determining equivalence, there was a substantial body of feminist work emerging on language and gender on both sides of the Atlantic, most notably in Canada, the United States and in France. In the English-speaking world, the principal linguistic question was that of sexist language, with language deemed to be a male system that ensured either the marginalization or the invisibility of women. In France, however, feminist debates about language developed entirely differently, with Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous, the three most prominent theorists, whose work was far more philosophical and less pragmatic than their American sisters, who were concerned to deconstruct the symbolic structures of patriarchy. Ironically, while some Anglo-American feminists reflected the influence of the seminal work by the French leftist writer, Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, first published in 1949 and appearing in a truncated English version in 1952, French feminist theory was most heavily influenced by the work of theorists such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan and

Jacques Derrida, to name but three. Where the Anglo-American tradition was activist, left-wing and pragmatic, French feminism leaned towards psychoanalytic theory and a highly intellectualized politics of gender.

In her study of the two strands of feminist thought, *Sexual/Textual Politics*, Toril Moi provides a succinct introduction to the emergence and development of two very different feminist approaches to language. She is highly critical of what she sees as the essentialism of much French feminist theory, although she exempts Kristeva from this charge, and indeed in the Afterword to her 2002 edition she declares herself opposed to homogenous, non-contradictory models of subjectivity and in favour of the Kristevan 'speaking subject'. It is interesting to speculate that both Moi herself, a Norwegian academic teaching French studies and writing in English, and Kristeva, a Bulgarian who changed the language of her writing to French after moving to Paris, should both have had first-hand active knowledge of the problems of translation. So too had Nicole Ward-Jouve, a French writer and academic based in England, whose autobiographical *White Woman Speaks with Forked Tongue* (1991) highlighted the gap between French and Anglo-American feminist theorizing. In particular, Ward-Jouve professed herself to be astonished by the selective nature of English translations of the work of French feminists, pointing out that what passed for French feminist theory in the English-speaking world was unrecognizable to her as a self-proclaimed French feminist who had read the originals. This she attributed to cultural difference, to the completely different traditions within which different groups of women were making demands for greater mainstream recognition, and to the selectivity of translators:

> The translation process implies untold selections, omissions, enlargements, that have as much to do with the translating culture, its needs and projections as they have with the writing that is being translated.
>
> (Ward-Jouve, 1991: 91)

This is precisely the point made by Even-Zohar and Lefevere: a culture that translates according to identifiable needs will

deliberately select or reject anything that does not meet those needs at a particular time. So, despite much of Kristeva's work finding its way into English, only a small part of the writings of Cixous and others was translated, yet its impact was considerable. In her book, *Gender and Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission*, Sherry Simon devotes a whole chapter to the translation of French feminist theory into English, appropriately entitled 'Missed Connections' (Simon, 1996). She begins by asking how it came about that from the mid-1970s onwards a form of 'collective infatuation' with French feminist theory took hold in the Anglo-American world and suggests that as the pragmatic vitality of American 'hands-on' feminism with its history of political activism spread, so there came to be a need for more conceptual thinking into the history and symbolism of patriarchy. Translation, Simon suggests, provided Anglo-American feminism with the tools they thought were missing:

> Through the French feminists, English-language readers came into contact with Continental philosophy and critical thought, modes of thinking which allowed a challenge to the very representation of knowledge and to the discursive construction of sexual identity.
>
> (Simon, 1996: 87)

What was harder to explain was why there should have been what Rebecca Comay terms such an inflated reaction to obscure currents of French thought in America, and quite why deconstruction more generally should have become so fashionable so rapidly. In the case of feminist theory, the difference between the Anglo-American and the French traditions was considerable, since as Simon puts it, the 'focus of French feminism lay in deconstructing the symbolic structure of patriarchy' (Simon, 1996: 90), a very different agenda from the cultural politics of women interested in exposing the linguistic reinforcement of their oppression in more practical ways. Simon blames the inadequacies of translation for many of the misconceptions that Anglo-American feminists came to have of their French colleagues, highlighting the difficulties of reading outside their original context complex texts that use completely different rhetorical strategies to engage readers. She is also perplexed by the

absence of more discussion of translation as a literary practice, given that so much attention was being paid in intellectual circles in the 1980s and early 1990s to critical theory read in translation. Yet just as in postcolonial theory, the vital role of translation was not only marginalized but transformed into metaphor, so even in the translation of feminist writings about language, the subject of translation per se failed to gain much ground. The focus of feminist scholarship was on the content of what was being read, regardless of whether a text had been translated, and hence without regard for the processes of interlingual and intercultural transformation that the texts had undergone. This is yet another classic example of the invisibility of the translator.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is one of the few postcolonial feminist theorists who has both translated and written about translation, highlighting the textual and contextual difficulties that all translators have to face and emphasizing the agency of the translator compelled by language, text and context to make specific choices. For example, in her translation of a short story, 'Draupadi' by the Bengali writer Mahasweta Devy, Spivak had to decide on whether to use a gender specific personal pronoun ('her' or 'his') since modern Bengali makes no such distinction. Spivak points out that her choice of the feminine 'her' was determined both by her own ideology and by the dual contextual framework within which she was working. Spivak was greatly indebted to Jacques Derrida's view of translation as a process wherein a so-called original text is endlessly modified, thereby exposing the fallacy of any absolute meaning. The translator 'plays' with language, and key to Derrida's thinking about translation is his idea of '*differance*', an invented term that alters the way in which we read the standard term 'difference', thereby compelling us to think about linguistic anomaly and about the impossibility of determining a 'pure' meaning behind words. Translation is undertaken not as a search for equivalence, but rather as an unending process that endows a text with new life and new meanings. As Derrida explains:

> Difference is never pure, no more so is translation, and for the notion of translation we would have to substitute a notion of *transformation*; a regulated transformation of one language by another, of one text by another. We will never have, and in fact never have had, to do with some 'transport' of pure signifieds from one language to another, or within one and the same language, that the signifying instrument would leave virgin and untouched.
>
> (Derrida, 1981: 20)

POSTCOLONIAL FEMINISM AND TRANSLATION

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has done a great deal to bring together some of the disparate lines of thought about language, gender and power that have been in circulation since the late 1970s. Her work in postcolonialism and comparative literary studies is well-known, and among her most celebrated translations are Devi's short stories, *Imaginary Maps* (1995) and, prior to that Derrida's *Of Grammatology* (1974), a translation that made her a key figure in the dissemination of deconstructionist thinking in the English-speaking world. Her most important essay on translation, aptly entitled 'The Politics of Translation' first appeared in her book, *Outside the Teaching Machine* (1993). In this essay, Spivak struggles to articulate the role of the feminist translator, which she defines as being 'to consider language as a clue to the workings of gendered agency' (Spivak, 2000 [1993]: 397). Translation, she argues is the most intimate of all acts of reading, and to clarify her idea of intimacy, she uses the image of the text as textile, suggesting that in the act of translating 'we feel the selvedges of the language-textile give way, fray into *frayages* or facilitations' (Spivak, 2000 [1993]: 398). The task of the translator is to facilitate what she describes as a love relationship with the original, 'a love that permits fraying, holds the agency of the translator and the demands of her actual or imagined audience at bay' (Spivak, 2000 [1993]: 398). The translator must surrender to the text, which in her terms means translating literally, or in Venuti's terms, foreignizing the text. What Spivak challenges is a translation strategy of domestication that erases traces of the otherness of the original, and she argues her case from a doubly politicized position, that of a feminist from the Third World, mindful of the history of translating non-Western

writing through a process of the erasure of difference. Spivak criticizes the essentialism of Western feminists with regard to women from the Third World, arguing that rather than imagining that all women have something identifiable in common around the world that they might express in a global language, what should happen is that the speaker of the hegemonic language should learn the other woman's language:

> I am talking about the importance of language acquisition for the woman from a hegemonic monolingualist culture who makes everybody's life miserable by insisting on women's solidarity at her price.
>
> (Spivak, 2000 [1993]: 407)

Spivak endeavours to highlight the risks of cultural appropriation through translation, hence her translation of Mahasweta Devi is supplemented by a preface, an interview with the author and an afterword. It is significant that a growing number of postcolonial and feminist translators have started to include this kind of supplementary material in their published translations, a further indication of the growing importance of translation as well as of the desire felt by translators to remind readers of the complex interlingual and intercultural processes that the text has undergone before reaching them.

Spivak's thinking about translation has received far less attention than her work on deconstruction and, more recently on comparative literature, but she deserves to be recognized as an important figure in translation studies. Edwin Gentzler accords her high praise for accomplishing what he defines as a kind of double-writing in her translation of Devi, where she is able both to criticize the process and the practice of Western epistemological categorization and to reveal 'the highly polyvalent and multicultural conditions that characterize the "original" culture' (Gentzler, 2001: 186). He also points out that Spivak's own reputation has resulted in the unusual situation of Mahasweta Devi enjoying far more prominence in English as a consequence of having been translated. He suggests that Spivak's translations from Bengali should be seen in close relation to her work on Derrida, since both strands are intended as interventions and

transformations, and raise questions about representation and meaning.

Spivak's foreignizing translations invite readers to consider the translatability of writing from other cultures, and her insistence on the idea of surrendering to the text raises important questions about the relationship of the translator as reader and as rewriter with the original. Underpinning Spivak's translation in theory and practice is her awareness of power inequalities that cannot fail to surface in language. In her essays on comparative literature, *Death of a Discipline* (2003) she calls for greater visibility of the choices made by translators, again highlighting the agency of the translator and the importance of challenging the cultural and linguistic hegemony of dominant cultures.

Since Spivak's translation of Devi appeared, there have been many more translations of Indian women's writing, both into Western languages and between Indian languages. In the preface to her collection *Translating Women: Indian Interventions*, N. Kamala considers the growing number of translations of individual works and of anthologies of Indian women's writing, and asks some fundamental questions that the book seeks to address:

> What differentiates, for example, a Telugu woman from a Hindi woman writer when they are both translated into a common western language? How are nuances of class, religion or caste maintained, if at all? What is foregrounded and what is erased in these translations? What are the politics that inform the choice of the authors to be translated? What is the agency of the translators in these cultural productions?
>
> (Kamala, 2009: xiv)

One of the most powerful pieces in this collection is a short essay by the Tamil writer, C.S. Lakshmi, known as Ambai. She recounts the experience of being translated into English, pointing out how different languages condition what is actually perceived. For example, Tamil distinguishes linguistically between *ival*, a woman standing close, *aval*, a woman standing a little distance away and *uval*, a woman standing far off, whereas English has just the one pronoun, 'she' that is unrelated to spatial positioning.

Ambai also highlights the great cultural differences that emerge from language:

> In Tamil, we sometimes describe eyes as 'rain-eyes' which are considered the most beautiful ... and we have fish-eyed and lotus-faced women and sometimes men have lotus feet. The images of these flowers evoke different memories in memories of us, not just of the flowers but also of their qualities and the emotions they evoke.
>
> (Ambai, 2009: 64)

Most significantly, Ambai challenges the way in which translation can create a hierarchy between the original, which she refers to as 'the translated', and the final version. She points out that translation into English is often perceived as doing the Indian language a 'favour', and complains about ways in which English translators have shaped Indian writing to fit their own preconceptions and prejudices, or to satisfy market demands. In her conclusion, she relates an anecdote about attending a conference on translation when a translator declared that since the author was dead, the translator could assume ownership. Ambai is appalled by this, which she sees, using a textile image similar to Spivak's image of fraying cloth, as an unravelling through an act of appropriation. Like Draupadi's sari, she sees a story as having hidden strands that must remain hidden. It is not the task of the translator to expose that which was deliberately withheld by the writer:

> Stories hide elements and emotions in a way that they reveal things in a totally different manner than what the translator can conceive. Everything about a story cannot be made bare like everything about a culture cannot be given exact meanings to be understood. Some mysteries must remain.
>
> (Ambai, 2009: 67)

WOMAN-HANDLING TEXTS

In the same way that some of the most innovative thinking about postcolonial translation has come from South American cultures, so some of the most exciting thinking about translation and

gender has come from Canada. Canada is officially bilingual, a policy formally enshrined by the 1969 Official Languages Act, so bilingual Canadians with an interest in gender and translation have been able to access feminist writing in both English and French. Such encounters have been highly productive, and a key element of Canadian feminist work on translation has been playfulness, building on ideas developed by such writers as Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous, and the idea of *écriture féminine*. In reading French feminist theorists, bilingual Canadians have the advantage over monolingual readers in that they are able to acknowledge the multiplicity of that phrase, since *féminine* has two variants in English, 'feminine' and 'female' which are utilized in slightly different ways, whereas the French word has a much broader field of meaning and the question of whether it refers to gender (as does the English feminine) or sex (female) does not arise. *Écriture féminine* can therefore embrace feminine, female and feminist writing. Cixous views the act of writing as a questioning of both self and other, hence *écriture féminine* challenges what she sees as the phallocentric and logocentric (phallogocentric) discourse of Western patriarchal culture. What this means is that women are already, effectively continually translating whenever they use language, since that language is man-made. Cixous calls into question what she sees as patriarchal binary thinking, and lists a series of binary oppositions upon which patriarchal systems of thought are based:

> Activity/Passivity
> Sun/Moon
> Culture/Nature
> Day/Night
> Father/Mother
> Head/Emotions
> Intelligible/Sensitive
> Logos/Pathos
>
> (Cixous, 1980 [1975]: 63)

Canadian, or more properly Quebecois feminists with an interest in translation, including Nicole Brossard, Barbara Godard,

Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood and Sherry Simon, to name but four, adapted the notion of *écriture féminine* to *réécriture au féminine*, the phrase devised by de Lotbinière-Harwood, who proposed that the feminist translator was rewriting her 'body bilingual' as she moved between 'the source text, the target language text-in-progress and the readers she is "entertaining" with her work' (de Lotbinière-Harwood, 1991: 160). Emphasis on movement in-between thus becomes a way of deconstructing the binary opposition of the traditional translation source/target, yet another binary distinction to add to the list proposed by Cixous. By analogy, a new feminist concept of translation would reject the dualism of original/translation, seeing both as stages in a process of continual creative rereading and rewriting.

Barbara Godard, who worked closely with Nicole Brossard, uses the term 'transformance' to emphasize the construction of meaning in feminist translation, which is seen as a productive, not a reproductive, activity. In her essay 'Theorizing Feminist Discourse/Translation', Godard suggests that translation as transcoding and transformation has become a topos in feminist discourse. Seeking to assert themselves in language, feminist writers subvert dominant discourses, stretching language elastically, playing with language, inventing language anew, rewriting and reformulating. So, for example,

> The dialogic moment of translation is at the centre of *Le desert mauve*, a fiction in which Brossard is translating herself, underlining the double activity of women's writing as reading/writing, as the re/reading of the already-written followed by the divining/writing of the unrecorded.
>
> (Godard, 1990: 89–90)

In that same essay, Godard endeavours to outline a theory of feminist translation, which she sees as based on a deliberate strategy of signifying difference. This means that the translator as rewriter has a very visible presence in the text, asserting her presence in a variety of ways and playing a role in the continuing life of the text. Godard uses the word 'flaunt' several times, declaring that the feminist translator sets aside modesty and flaunts her

signature through textual and paratextual intervention. Godard also famously coined the neologism 'woman-handling', a play on the idea of man-handling that implies physical violence:

> The feminist translator, affirming her critical difference, her delight in interminable re-reading and re-writing, flaunts the signs of her manipulation of the text. *Woman-handling* the text in translation would involve the replacement of the modest self-effacing translator.
>
> (Godard, 1990: 94)

One of the most entertaining and informative books about woman-handling texts through translation is by the distinguished US translator, Suzanne Jill Levine. Provocatively entitled *The Subversive Scribe: Translating Latin American Fiction*, Levine's book provides an insider account of the difficulties of translating some of the greatest Latin American male writers, who use very different language registers in their novels. She starts out with one of the greatest problems for any translator, the verbal humour of puns, and one of the anecdotes she tells is how she and Guillermo Cabrera Infante, the Cuban writer, arrived at the English title for his novel, *Tres tristes tigres* (three sad tigers):

> A list poured forth: 'three tired tigers' (we feared readers would yawn), 'three flat tigers' (also dangerous), 'three triped tigers' (too forced), 'three-tongued tigers' (had to be pronounced with an oriental accent according to Severo Sarduy, cleverly underscoring Cuban multilingualism, but Cabrera Infante's book does not highlight Havana's Chinatown as does Sarduy's *De donde son los cantantes*), 'three triggered tigers' (only readers of *Winnie-the-Pooh* would remember Tigger), until finally we agreed on 'three trapped tigers', trapped in memory, in the book, in English exile forever.
>
> (Levine, 1991: 29)

Levine's book consists of short pieces, organized into four sections: 'Puns: The Untranslatable', 'Spoken into Written', 'The Source of the Source' and 'Words are Never the Same', through which she explores both the process of translating and theorizing about translation. In her final piece, she reflects on her own role as the

feminized translator, ironically defining herself as self-betrayer, as a woman who has fallen under the spell of male discourse, in that she has translated books that often depict women in negative terms; but also as a subversive scribe, someone engaged in '"transcreating" writing that stretches the boundaries of patriarchal discourse' (Levine, 1991: 181). Levine says that what drew her to translate certain writers (she has translated Adolfo Bioy Casares, Gabriel García Márquez, Miguel Puig and many others) was the playful possibility of recreating verbal games in her own language. She sees translation as an art positioned between the scholarly and the creative, noting that as part of the continuity of the original, translation can

> be a route through which a writer/translator may seek to reconcile fragments: fragments of texts, of language, of oneself. From a readerly perspective, translation is an act of interpretation. From a writerly one (for this now visible invisible scribe) it has been a (w)rite of passage.
>
> (Levine, 1991: 184)

Levine inscribes herself very visibly into her translations, and in *The Subversive Scribe* she reflects not only on the impact she has had on the texts she translates, but also what impact the act of translating has had on her as she endeavours to be 'faithful' to the writers she is translating:

> Translating is a mode of writing that might enable one to find one's own language through another's, but then again all writing involves such a search. Perhaps a found style completes the search, but doesn't the original language, intention or reality remain eternally elusive? How faithful can one be? And faithful to what?
>
> (Levine, 1991: 2)

THE *BELLES INFIDÈLES*

Levine plays with the idea of faithfulness and betrayal in her highly readable, witty and very profound book. It is an appropriate image, since one of the most recurring uses of figurative language about translation hinges on the idea of betrayal, of

unfaithfulness. That image has also been explicitly associated with women: a translation, goes the old adage, is like a woman – if she is beautiful, she is bound to be unfaithful. This image of the *belles infidèles* (the lovely unfaithful ones) coined by a French critic, Gilles de Ménage (1613–92) has recurred over the centuries in discourse about translation, but goes back long before de Ménage's playful phrase. In her essay on 'Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation', Lori Chamberlain examines the emergence and use of the phrase from a feminist perspective. She points out that this effective sexualization of translation places both translation and woman in a subordinate position: in traditional marriage, only a wife could legally be charged with infidelity, hence the husband/original could never be guilty of that same crime, and she declares that 'such an attitude betrays real anxiety about the problem of paternity and translation; it mimics the patrilineal kinship system where paternity–not maternity–legitimizes an offspring' (Chamberlain, 2000 [1985]: 315). Chamberlain considers the use of figurative language about translation in statements by a range of writers and critics from the seventeenth-century Earl of Roscommon through to the modern critic George Steiner, concluding that the conventional hierarchy of superior original/lesser translation keeps recurring. She suggests that this is a perspective that arises from a distinction in value between production and reproduction, with originality/production being labelled as both more legitimate and more significant than translation/reproduction. This distinction she finds codified in academic discourse in general, noting that although the study of classics of world literature, of major philosophical writings and of writing by Third World postcolonial authors in American universities, are reliant on translations, nevertheless translation is still considered a more lowly activity than 'original' writing. She also points out that even those critics who attempt a more radical view of the relationship between original and translation, such as the Yale critic Harold Bloom and the Marxist critic Terry Eagleton still define translation in the same patriarchal terms. Since only a translation can be guilty of unfaithfulness, and given that translation is always benchmarked against the original from which it derives, it follows that the translation is always relegated to a position of inferiority.

Chamberlain regards thinking about feminism and translation as still largely uncharted terrain, and like other North American feminist critics, turns to Derrida's work as potentially enabling. Her view is that poststructuralist theory combined with feminist theory has served as a means towards encouraging a greater understanding of the implicit and explicit power relations involved in all translation. She also notes the lack of historical research into the role of translation in women's writing at different times, and like Lefevere, calls for more to be understood about the selection processes by which texts are chosen for translation, the impact of translations in the receiving culture and the potentially subversive role that translations can play 'in articulating women's speech and subverting hegemonic forms of expression' (Chamberlain, 2000 [1985]: 327).

A CONTENTIOUS HISTORY

Chamberlain's essay first appeared in 1985, and since then there has been a lot more research into the whole area of gender and translation. Also, since translation studies first came into being in the 1970s, there has been an emphasis on drawing up a more accurate picture of the diachronics of men's and women's translation activity, similar to the ways in which feminism brought to light the history of women's artistic production that had previously been marginalized or forgotten, or to the ways in which postcolonial studies challenged the conventional history of colonialism as one of Europe 'exporting' culture to the barbarians. We now know much more about the history of women translators, and it is significant that women have often played a major role in the transmission of texts across cultural boundaries. What is less clear is what the presence of women translators signifies in the history of literary production, given the ambiguity that has for so long surrounded accounts of the role of translation in shaping literary history.

It is certainly the case that more identifiable women were engaged in translation during the Renaissance than had been previously recorded. What is not clear is what this increase in female translators signifies. It could be that the increase in translations by women, in parallel with a rise in the number of women

producing original poetry and prose (we need only think of writers such as Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, Marguerite de Valois, Vittoria Colonna, Aemilia Lanyer, Gaspara Stampa and countless others across Europe) reflected a rise in the number of educated, literate women engaged in writing and hence acquiring a public voice. However, it has been suggested that translation was a limited option chosen by some women because, as Sherry Simon puts it, it provided camouflage for open involvement in textual production (Simon, 1996: 46) and did not challenge the status quo. Women could retain their respectability as author-translators, which might have been called into question had they claimed the right to sole authorship. Tina Krontiris holds a similar view, noting that the majority of translations by women into English during the Renaissance were of religious texts, which conferred additional respectability on this activity (Krontiris, 1992). What these views do not take into account, however, is that translating religious texts in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was far from being a marginal activity, since the translation of such texts was politically highly charged and led, in some cases, to the imprisonment and execution of translators deemed heretical. The risk of evaluating the status of women as translators during the Renaissance in twentieth-first century terms is that the past is read through a modern feminist filter that skews both the importance of translation and the importance of religious writing for our predecessors.

One interesting example of a female Renaissance translator is Queen Elizabeth I of England, who translated throughout her lifetime. In 1593, at the age of 60, she translated Boethius' *De consolatione philosophiae*, and before her death in 1603 she had also produced translations of Horace and Plutarch. It is interesting to speculate on why she decided, at a point in her life when she was ill and often depressed, to translate at high speed these texts, all of which in different ways revolve around the fickleness of fortune, ingratitude and the ugliness of sycophancy and flattery. She was clearly not translating for publication, but rather using translation as a way of rereading texts that had a particular significance for her personally. Elizabeth's first known translation was her version of Marguerite of Navarre's *The Glasse of the Synnfull Soule*, which she

undertook at the age of 11, to present to her stepmother, Catherine Parr, in a cover she had embroidered herself. The gift of a translation enclosed within a piece of embroidery was therefore a demonstration of the child's practical and intellectual skills.

A steady stream of studies into the history of women as translators shows that translation activity was widespread, although once again we encounter the difficulty of assessing the impact of such work because of the low status accorded to translations by the writers of literary histories. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, women were involved in the translation of scientific texts as well in as the translation of literature, and the resurgence of theatre in England, following the restoration of Charles II in 1660 resulted in many women becoming involved in translating plays from other European languages for the popular stage, among the best known of whom are Katherine Philips, Elizabeth Griffith and Elizabeth Inchbald. Professional women writers and translators were also notably present, with Aphra Behn often cited as a significant early example of a woman who earned a living through writing, although as the idea of translation as a second-class activity took hold, particularly in the English-speaking world, so we find women reluctant to acknowledge the skills they required in order to translate. George Eliot, for example, translated both Spinoza and Feuerbach, and even attached her own name, Marian Evans, to her translation of the latter's *Essence of Christianity*, but she nevertheless rated translation as less significant than what she termed 'good' original works, commenting that while a good translator 'is infinitely below the man who produces *good* original works', that translator is 'infinitely above the man who produces *feeble* original works' (Eliot in Stark, 1999: 47). Eliot seems here to have conceived of some kind of hierarchy of writing, with what she terms good translation being lower than the best of original writing, but superior to what she dismisses as poor writing. Unfortunately she does not clarify her criteria, though Susanne Stark, who has studied the significance of women translators working between English and German in the nineteenth century notes that, like many other women of her generation, Eliot produced both translations and original writing and boosted her income from both.

Although George Eliot's translations are relatively unknown, the nineteenth century saw a great rise in the number of women translating into English; Eleanor Marx Aveling, daughter of Karl Marx, not only translated her father's work, but also translated Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* and studied Norwegian in order to translate plays by Ibsen. That a woman should have translated works that pushed the boundaries of propriety is an indication not only of Eleanor Marx Aveling's intellectual courage, but is also a reflection of an increased awareness by some women of the potential political significance of translation. This is particularly evident in the work of two aristocratic women translators, both of whom were instrumental in raising awareness of the rich heritage of work in the Celtic languages. The importance of translation in the Irish Celtic Revival through the work of Lady Augusta Gregory and W.B. Yeats is well-known, although once again we often find Lady Gregory's work categorized at times as compilation rather than as translation, despite her passionate commitment to the Irish language. Equally committed to bringing to the reading public a major work in a Celtic language was Lady Charlotte Guest, who published her version of the great Welsh epic, *The Mabinogion* between 1838 and 1849, working with the Welsh bard John Jones (Tegid). Charlotte Guest's translation, produced alongside giving birth to no less than ten children was to remain the most widely-read English version for more than a century, republished long after her death in 1895 in the Penguin Classics series.

A year before Lady Guest's death, in 1894, an unknown woman translator brought out a translation from Russian of a work by Ivan Goncharov. That translator was Constance Garnett, an astonishingly prolific translator who introduced English readers to the great nineteenth-century Russian prose writers, including Tolstoy, Chekhov, Gogol, Turgenev and Dostoevsky. In a short essay assessing the impact of her translations on English literature, Edward Crankshaw comments that a bad translator could have killed the great Russian writers 'stone-dead', whereas

> by a piece of amazing good luck they found Mrs Garnett, and, through her, entered in their full status into English literature. And,

> having entered it, they changed it. This means, in effect, that Mrs Garnett gave us a new literature.
>
> (Crankshaw, 2006: 295)

In a radio interview shortly before her death in 1946, Constance Garnett expressed the wish to be judged by her translation of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, and briefly explained what she had tried to do through her 60-odd volumes of translations from Russian:

> The qualifications for a translator are to be in sympathy with the author he is translating, and most important of all to be in love with words and interested in all their meanings. The language of a country is the soul of the people, and if you debase the language you debase the people and rob them of their heritage.
>
> (Garnett, 2006 [1946]: 292)

We might note here that, following the conventions of her time, Garnett refers to the author as 'he', using the masculine pronoun generically. However, she chooses to describe her translations in terms of a love relationship, an image used also by other women translators. The Uruguayan writer, Cristina Peri Rossi, for example, defines translation as an act of love, as a kind of obsession where the translator pursues an unobtainable object, unobtainable in that no one can entirely possess another's text, 'just as one cannot rewrite it without changing it' (Peri Rossi, 2002: 58). As in love, Peri Rossi declares, absolute fidelity is impossible, as is total textual identification. Peri Rossi writes playfully about her passionate 'affaires' with her translators; on the other side of the Atlantic, Dorothy Sayers, who spent more than 18 years translating Dante's *Divina Commedia* into rhymed English verse wrote in a very different mood to E.V. Rieu, editor of the Penguin Classics series. Sayers was best known for her detective fiction (she was the creator of Lord Peter Wimsey), but saw her translation of Dante as the truest expression of her creativity, declaring that she had fallen in love with Dante. Interestingly, Derrida uses the same language for the relationship between an original text and its woman translator: 'She is the one who is loved by the author and on whose basis alone writing is possible' (Derrida, 1985: 53).

Sayers' Penguin translation, as was the case with Charlotte Guest's *Mabinogion*, went on to become a bestselling edition for decades, despite numerous other translations that appeared subsequently.

ASSERTING A FEMALE PRESENCE

Sayers declared her passion for just one writer, Garnett was obsessed with an entire literature, but despite the success of their translations (Garnett can arguably be said to have been one of the leading influences on the development of the novel in English in the early twentieth century) neither chose any of the strategies that have come to be used today by many women translators. Writing about feminist translation in 1991, Luise von Flotow identified three distinct practices used by feminist translators, which she calls 'supplementing', 'prefacing and footnoting' and the more controversial 'hijacking' (von Flotow, 1991). Supplementing, or compensating in the target language is what Levine was doing with her rendering of *tres tristes tigres* as 'three trapped tigers', while it is indeed the case that many women translators use footnotes and prefaces and other paratextual material to make their translation strategies more directly visible to the reader. Josephine Balmer's translations of Ancient Greek or Roman poetry, which will be discussed later, offer a good example of this device. 'Hijacking' is where the translator charges a text that was not originally feminist with feminist significance, for example, altering gendered language or, in more extreme cases such as Jane Holland's translation of the Anglo-Saxon poem 'The Wanderer', changing the sex of the protagonist. Holland has deliberately made the speaker of the poem an older woman, a tactic she justifies by claiming that each age needs to reinvent a classical text for its own purposes. Holland's translation is an example of textual 'woman-handling', and the effect is to alter the way we read one of the great classical poems in the Anglo-Saxon canon. Another example of 'hijacking' is Julie Taymor's film of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (2010) where the role of Prospero is played by a woman (Helen Mirren). The point about all these strategies is that they signal the visible agency of a translator, whether on the

page or on a stage or in film, and challenge the notion of the translator as servant, or handmaiden of a superior original. They also invite us to rethink the relationship between writer and translator, reinforcing Paz's proposition that writing and translation are twin processes.

4

TRANSLATING ACROSS TIME

FLUCTUATIONS IN TRANSLATION RECEPTION

While problems of translating across cultural boundaries have been receiving considerable attention since the advent of post-colonialism and culturally-oriented translation studies, the issue that has exercised translators and translation critics for much longer has been the relationship between a text created in one moment of time and its transmission to a new set of readers in another. This issue is directly linked to the whole vexed question of how to evaluate the quality of a translation; it is important to remind ourselves that every age has its ideal of translation, and aesthetic criteria change, sometimes so rapidly that it is impossible to establish a constant set of norms for good translation practice. Dr Johnson, for example, published his *Life of Pope* in 1781 and declared that Pope's translation of Homer was the noblest version of poetry that the world had ever seen. Yet a few years later, when the heroic couplet favoured by Pope had fallen out of fashion in the new age of Romanticism, Pope's Homer ceased to have much impact. By 1831, Robert Southey was

heavily critical of Pope's translation and dismissed it as a corrupting influence on English poetry in general.

In 1816, the 20-year-old John Keats wrote one of the best-known poems about a translation, a sonnet entitled 'On First Looking into Chapman's Homer'. The poem compares Keats' first reading of Chapman's translation to a great scientific discovery or to the sense of wonder experienced by Hernán Cortés when he first looked out at the Pacific Ocean:

> Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
> When a new planet swims into his ken;
> Or like stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes
> He stared at the Pacific.
>
> (Keats, 1967: 291)

George Chapman (*c.* 1559–1634) translated *The Iliad* over a period of more than ten years, bringing out the full final version in 1611 as *The Iliads of Homer, Prince of Poets, Never Before in any Language Truly Translated.* Between 1614 and 1616 he produced a second translation, *Odysseys of Homer, Translated According to the Greek.* Chapman used a Greek text, in an edition published in Basle in 1583 with a facing-page Latin translation, and drew on a range of secondary sources including versions in Latin, French and Italian. Simeon Underwood, who has surveyed English translators of Homer, agrees that Chapman's translation was reliant on numerous sources, not wholly on the Greek text, but does not see this as surprising, given the predominance of Latin over Greek in English schools and universities in the sixteenth century (Underwood, 1998). What Chapman did that made his translation so successful and for so long, was to find a poetic metre suited to the subject matter of *The Iliad.* Although with his *Odyssey* he reverted back to the more usual ten-syllable rhyming couplet metre, for *The Iliad* he used a 14-syllable line. He also wrote a preface justifying his translation strategy, and complaining about translators who either adopted a word-for-word approach, which he felt was antithetical to 'True Poesie' or who took 'more licence from the words than may expresse/their full comprehension and make cleare the Author'

(Chapman, 1598–1611). Chapman saw himself as the English voice of Homer, stressing the importance of producing a good English poem that would do justice both to the poetic qualities of the original and to those of his own language. Writing at the height of the English Renaissance, Chapman's translation was original and innovative in that, like Shakespeare, he also introduced new words and phrases into the English language, and was exciting to read. Ezra Pound, who translated from a number of languages, once declared that translation from Ancient Greek was a doomed enterprise, since apart from Chapman, who was 'something different', he did not see how English readers could obtain any idea of Greek, because 'there are no satisfactory English translations' (Pound 1968 [1951]:58). Pound clearly saw Chapman as unique, but Charles Swinburne was less flattering, commenting rather spitefully in 1875 that 'no poet was ever less of a Greek in style or spirit' (Swinburne in Underwood, 1998: 27). But Swinburne's judgement ignores the fact that Chapman was not attempting to produce a 'Greek' style; he was translating for a readership for whom, for the most part, Homer was new. He was therefore not constrained by earlier models of translation, nor was he constrained by excessive reverence for the Greek source. In common with other Renaissance translators, such as Gavin Douglas who translated the *Aeneid* so successfully into Scots in 1513 (published posthumously in 1553), Chapman's commitment was primarily to extending the range of vernacular language and literature. It is significant that 'englishing' was often used as a synonym for 'translating' in the Renaissance, while Douglas claimed to be writing 'in the language of the Scottis natioun'. Establishing vernacular languages as challengers to the pre-eminence of Latin was an important aspect, conscious and unconscious, of much Renaissance translation. The success of Chapman's Homer can be gauged by the fact that his translations were widely read until Pope's version rose to prominence in the early eighteenth century; that Keats should have been so impressed by his first encounter with Chapman's version in the early nineteenth century serves also to indicate the fluctuating patterns in the reception of translations at different times.

REACHING OUT TO THE PAST

A comparison of the way in which texts from earlier periods have been translated for different generations of readers exposes huge shifts in aesthetic sensibility, in audience expectations and, as a consequence, in the strategies employed by translators. Nietzsche reflected on the problems of transposing writing from one age into another, criticizing the way in which some Roman translators had been 'averse to the ancient intuitive spirit that preceded the historical sensibility', that is, how they refashioned the past for readers in the present (Nietzsche, 1992 [1882]: 69). What he advocated was the preservation of that ancient spirit, noting that this presents translators with the most difficult task of all:

> One can gauge the degree of the historical sensibility an age possesses by the manner in which it translates texts, and by the manner in which is seeks to incorporate past epochs and books into its own being. Corneille's Frenchmen, and even those of the Revolution, took hold of Roman antiquity in a manner that we, thanks to our more refined sense of history, would no longer have the courage to employ ... And then Roman antiquity itself ... the Romans translated ... to suit their own age and ... intentionally as well as carelessly, they swished into oblivion the dust from a butterfly's wing, thus obliterating its one unique moment!
>
> (Nietzsche, 1992 [1882]: 68)

What Nietzsche does is to essentialize the past, but in his complaint about the inadequacy of some translations he touches upon the fundamental question that underpins all translation from all cultures and all ages: whether to translate in such a way that the reader is taken towards the text, or conversely, whether to bring the text to the reader. Schleiermacher's foreignizing versus domesticating distinction problematizes still further this basic question, and what is clear from a diachronic survey of translation strategies is that practice is variable and inconsistent. Each age makes anew, reshaping, restructuring and redrafting texts from the past. The seventeenth-century English translator of Horace, Henry Rider uses an image of translation that was fashionable in his own time, one of dress-making, involving the remodelling of old garments:

> Translations of Authors from one language to another are like old garments turn'd into new fashions; in which though the stuffe still be the same, yet the die and trimming are altered, and in the making, here something added, there something cut away.
>
> (Rider in Venuti, 1995: 49–50)

This metaphor is significant, given the fact that even in wealthy households old garments were constantly refashioned to serve new purposes. Translation is seen here as a practical solution, a means of preserving outdated clothing, not so much with the aim of introducing innovation but rather of transforming what is held to be good in order to ensure its longevity. In his important essay on Renaissance translation into English, Warren Boutcher takes up Francis Otto Matthiesson's point that any study of Elizabethan translations is a study of how the Renaissance came to England, suggesting that this process involved not only the rediscovery of classical languages but an engagement also with European vernaculars, resulting in the subsequent enrichment of English writing (Boutcher, 2000). Significantly, in the Renaissance, the term 'englishing' came to be used as a synonym for 'translating' and Matthiesson goes so far as to suggest that translation in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries came to be seen as a patriotic activity:

> The nation had grown conscious of its cultural inferiority to the Continent, and suddenly burned with the desire to exceed its rivals in letters, as well as in ships and gold. The translator's work was an act of patriotism.
>
> (Matthiesson, 1931: 3)

FORM AND CONTENT

Henry Rider refers to the 'stuffe' that the translator is called upon to refashion: the question is, of course, what constitutes that 'stuffe'. Some translators have made a distinction between form and

content, often focusing on the latter. Sometimes this strategy leads to disaster, but on other occasions it can prove highly successful. In 1946, for example, the founding editor of the new Penguin Classics series, E.V. Rieu, published his own translation of Homer's *Odyssey* in prose. His translation sold more than 100,000 copies within months, and some 50 years later had sold over three million. His prose version of *The Iliad* that was published in 1950 also did well, with sales topping one and a half million copies. There had been other prose translations of Homer, but Rieu's became a worldwide bestseller, exemplifying the policy of the new series of books, which was to make classical works accessible to a new generation of postwar readers. Rieu argued that the epic as a form had ceased to have any relevance for contemporary readers, and that the role played by the epic poem had been superseded by the novel. In his preface to the *Odyssey*, he suggested that while the *Iliad* should be read as a tragedy, the *Odyssey* 'with its well-knit plot, its psychological interest and its interplay of character' was 'the true ancestor of the long line of novels that have followed it' (Rieu, 1946: viii). His aim was to reach out to attract a new, popular market, so as to create another generation of readers for ancient texts: a laudable idea in itself, but one that had serious implications for poetry. For part of Rieu's strategy was to provide classical works for modern readers in modern English, not in the 'stilted, old-fashioned and otherwise un-English style which has too often been adopted by translators' (Rieu, 1946: n.p.). He wanted to move away from the archaizing that had been a prominent feature of much classical translation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and in terms of sales, his translations of Homer were extremely successful. However, he was severely criticized for dumbing down Homer by removing the poetry altogether; Adam Parry summed up the negative verdicts on Rieu's modernization of Homer when he wrote:

> The world of Homer is in fact vastly different from ours, different from the worlds of all of us, and to pretend that Homer talked as we do leads to translation as unreal as to pretend that he spoke, or composed, like the Jacobean translators of the Bible.
>
> (Parry, 1989: 43)

Simeon Underwood points out that Rieu's use of oral idioms of his own time has actually made the translations appear dated more rapidly than some of the archaizing prose translations, such as those of Andrew Lang or Samuel Butler. Reading Rieu today, what is most striking is the banality of the language, the *reductio ad absurdam* of Greek and Trojan heroes, gods and goddesses speaking like passengers on a number 47 bus. Nevertheless, Rieu's was a bold attempt to bring Homer to a mass readership, and probably less extreme than the version of the *Iliad* made in 1714 by the French writer, Houdar de la Motte, who set out his views on translation in a preface. De la Motte clearly disliked a lot about Homer, and true to his age, saw much of the Ancient Greek world of Homer as emblematic of an excess of bad taste. He informed his readers that he had been compelled to make major adjustments to *The Iliad*, leaving out redundant material, making the narrative move at a faster pace, excising pointless comparisons and seeking to make the characters more consistent. Explaining the reasons why he had reduced the 24 books of the epic poem to 12, and those 12 much shorter than Homer's, he argued that none of this had been done at the expense of any important elements:

> But if you pause to reflect that repetitions make up more than one-sixth of the *Iliad*, and that the anatomical details of wounds and the warriors' long speeches make up a lot more, you will be right in thinking that it has been easy for me to shorten the poem without losing any important features of the plot. I flatter myself that I have done just that and I even think I have succeeded in bringing the essential parts of the action together in such a way that they form a better proportioned and more sensible whole than Homer's original.
>
> (de la Motte (1714) in Lefevere, 1992a: 29)

Both de la Motte and Rieu produced translations for their own time, offering interpretations of Homer that they felt would meet the needs of their contemporaries and in consequence assisting Homer to acquire a new readership in a new age. The problem in both their versions is that they separate the content (Rieu says in his preface to the *Odyssey* that Homer is the world's best storyteller) from the form. This means that readers have no inkling of

how the Ancient Greek text's structures enhanced the development of plot, character and mood, nor any sense that they may be encountering another world altogether. Both Rieu and de la Motte therefore view it as their responsibility to retell the story in terms that are easily accessible to their contemporaries, and to do this, the form is sacrificed.

Other writers see things differently. Seamus Heaney, in his preface to his 1999 translation of *Beowulf* argues that a work of what he calls imaginative vitality possesses its own continuous present:

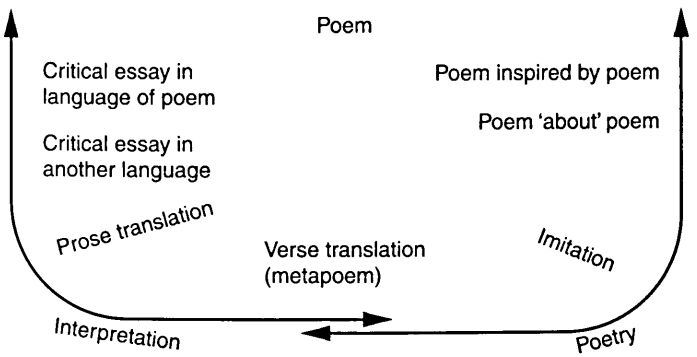
> Its narrative elements may belong to a previous age but as a work of art it lives in its own continuous present, equal to our knowledge of reality in the present time.
>
> (Heaney, 1999: ix)

Explaining his own translation strategy, Heaney describes how he sought the right rhythm and tone for his version of *Beowulf*. Finding lexical meanings for words and having a sense of the metre is, as he puts it, one thing, but it is quite another thing to find what he calls the tuning fork to give the 'note and pitch for the overall music of the work' (Heaney, 1999: xxvi). That note and pitch came to him through recognition of the directness of the original narrative voice, combined with a deepening understanding of the oral forms of Anglo-Saxon in relation to the Ulster English spoken by his own relatives.

There is a vast literature on the translation of poetry, more than on the translation of any other text type, but very little consensus. One interesting essay is James Holmes' 'Forms of Verse Translation and the Translation of Verse Forms' in which he argues that because all translation is an act of critical interpretation, a translation of a poem is in effect a critical commentary on the source text, as well as being a primary text in its own right. He suggests that it might be helpful if this type of text were to be designated as a 'metapoem' (Holmes, 1988b: 93) and identifies four types of translation strategy, citing examples of translations of Homer. He points out that a translator has to make choices between which elements of a poem are, and are not, translatable, in order to

establish what he calls a 'hierarchy of correspondences'. These choices determine which of those elements will either be retained in some way or rejected, and also the order of priority allocated to them in the target text in contrast with their position in the original poem. Each translator will establish his or her individual hierarchy, and make decisions about what may be transmitted through the translation. Since identical form is impossible, a translator may create patterns that can resemble those of the original, an example being the mimetic hexameters used by Richmond Lattimore in his translation of Homer. Another translator may choose to try and reproduce the function of the original poem, creating analogous forms for similar effect, or a translator may concentrate attention on transforming the content material into a new poetic structure, such as Ezra Pound's free verse translation of Homer in the first of his Cantos. Holmes also discusses what he calls 'deviant forms', which he sees as occasions when a translator retains only minimal similarity between source and target, something that will be discussed in the chapter on the boundaries of translation.

Holmes' diagram proposes two distinct tracks that start out with verse translation: the one he terms interpretation, and the stages on that track are: prose translation, critical essay in another language and finally, critical essay in the language of the poem. The other track starts with imitation, then moves to a poem 'about' the poem and finally to a poem inspired by the poem. The verse translation remains at the central point between these two



tracks. If we follow this model, therefore, Rieu's prose translation of Homer will be located on the track leading away from poetry and towards critical interpretation, since any attempt to render the poetry of the original has been sacrificed in favour of a linear reading experience designed to appeal to readers of prose fiction, while Heaney's translation is firmly located at the base of the diagram, as a metapoem.

TRANSLATING FOR TODAY

The drive to translate for one's own time is not only fuelled by a wish to reach as many readers as possible, but also, where a text is well-known, by a desire to improve on previous translators' efforts and to remedy what is often seen as outdated language or misinterpretation. This is notably the case with the translation of sacred texts, and the history of translations of the Bible is fraught with disagreements about interpretation that have at times led to open conflict and resulted in the persecution and even the death of the translator. The issue with Bible translation, of course, is that beyond the interpretative dimension in terms of both translation and readings, there is no single source text but rather a palimpsest of versions in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, along with a vast quantity of commentaries and other religious writings, hence the high number of disputes about the authenticity of sources. Nevertheless, translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek began in the third century BC, and translation of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament into Latin began early in the Christian era. George Steiner summarizes the continual impulse behind translating the Bible, pointing out that a constant theme in Patristic literature and the life of the early Church was the need to translate Christ's message so that all human beings might be given an opportunity of salvation through an encounter with the Word of God. Translation in the Christian world was therefore essential to humanity's spiritual progress, and changes in doctrine necessitated new translations:

> Each impulse towards reformation from inside the Church brings with it a call for more authentic, more readily intelligible versions of the holy word. There is a very real sense in which reformation can be defined as a summons to a fuller, more concrete translation of Christ's teachings both into daily speech and into daily life.
>
> (Steiner, 1992: 258)

It is therefore not surprising that there should have been a surge of translations in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the age that not only experienced the onset of the Reformation and the backlash of the Counter-Reformation, but also a period that saw an astonishing development of literatures in vernacular languages across Europe, boosted by Bible translations that aided the process and came to acquire canonical status both as literary and religious texts. For example, the first printed Czech Bible came out in 1488, with translations into languages including Dutch (1526), French (1530), Swedish (1541), Danish (1550), Polish (1561), Welsh (1588) and Hungarian (1590) among others, following one after the other. There were also translations of the New Testament, with Luther's German version published in 1522, an Icelandic translation in 1540 and a Croat New Testament in 1563, to cite but three. The history of many of these translations is complex and troubled, but powerful nevertheless, as is the history of Bible translation into English. Bible translations into English in the sixteenth century were undertaken in a time of increasingly bitter debate between Catholic and Protestant, and the number of translations undertaken is an indication of the importance of doctrinal difference, articulated through language. Among the most notable Protestant translations are the Great Bible of 1539–41, the Calvinist Geneva Bible of 1560, and the Bishops' Bible of 1568. Finally, in 1611 the Authorized Version was published, also known as the King James Bible, a rare example of a highly effective translation being made by a committee of some 50 learned men rather than by a single, dedicated individual translator. It should be noted, however, that the 1611 version relied heavily on an earlier translation by William Tyndale who had been forced to flee from England to escape the authorities, whose vernacular translation of the Old Testament had been publically burned, and whose New Testament was printed in Antwerp in 1534 and smuggled into England. Tyndale's capital offence was that he

made the Word of God available to ordinary people; he was betrayed by an English spy and was burned at the stake in Flanders in 1536. For Catholics, the Rheims-Douai Bible was published the year before the Authorized Version, in 1610.

Since the publication of the Authorized Version there have been countless other translations for use in different Christian churches. Richard France, in his useful survey of the Bible in English, highlights some of the factors governing different translations, which include linguistic modernization, seeking a more inclusive language, taking account of changing trends in biblical scholarship and recognition of the fact that the texts being translated had been intended for oral delivery rather than for private reading since they were produced in an age of widespread illiteracy (France, 2000). However, there is another aspect to Bible translation since the publication of the Authorized Version, which concerns its impact on literatures in English, for the King James Bible is almost certainly the most successful translation ever produced, not only in ecclesiastical circles but through centuries of writing in both prose and poetry. In short, it has become a canonical text.

CANONIZATION

In his course of Cambridge lectures given in 1913–14, Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, otherwise known as Q, began his seventh lecture as follows:

> If you would write good English, study the Authorized Version of the Scriptures; to learn from it, moreover, how by mastering *rhythm*, our Prose overcame the capital difficulty of Prose and attuned itself to rival its twin instrument, Verse; compassing almost equally with Verse man's thought however sublime, his emotion however profound.
>
> (Quiller-Couch, 1954 [1916]: 90)

As an example of the blending of prose with poetry and the importance of rhythm in both, Q provides three versions of Saint Paul's *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, chapter 15, verses 51–7. This is one of the best-known passages in the Bible, where Paul

expounds the Christian doctrine of the triumph of the Resurrection, which destroys the power of death. It is a passage frequently used in funeral services, and verse 55 – 'O death where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' – is one of the best-known and most cited passages in the Bible. Q gives the version by John Wycliffe from the late fourteenth century, followed by Tyndale's and the Authorized Version, although he offers no comment on any of them. The three versions of verse 55 which he provides are:

> Deeth, where is thi victorie? deeth, where is thi pricke?
>
> (Wycliffe)

> Deeth, where is thy stynge? Hell, where is thy victory?
>
> (Tyndale)

> O Death, where is thy sting? Oh grave, where is thy victory?
>
> (Authorized Version)

What is immediately obvious from these three versions, apart from the spelling and the replacement of the earlier word 'pricke' by the later more generally used 'sting' are the variations in appellants. Wycliffe twice addresses death, Tyndale addresses death and then hell, the Authorized Version addresses death, then the grave. In addition, Tyndale has changed the order of the questions, so that the word 'victory' is highlighted by coming last, as it also appears in the 1611 version. A cursory comparison of later translations shows similar fluctuations, with twentieth-century versions most obviously changing the archaic 'thy' to 'your'. One interesting variation is the New International Version of 1984, which adds a new rhetorical flourish: 'Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?'

Such changes are far more than stylistic adjustments; obviously they have doctrinal implications, and the sting of death echoes the Old Testament book of *Hosea*, chapter 13, verse 14 – 'O Death, where are your plagues?' – but for the lay reader they also present shifts of emphasis, achieved by subtle changes in word order. The most significant change of all can be found in

Alexander Pope's reworking of this verse as the final two lines of his poem, 'The Dying Christian to his soul' which reads:

> O Grave, where is thy victory?
> O Death, where is thy sting?

Pope, the poet-translator reversed the order of the Authorized Version, so as to end on a strong monosyllable that creates an almost triumphant note, and it is Pope's reworking of the verse that has become the most memorable, because whereas in the Authorized Version the two questions are posed reflectively, in Pope's poem they appear both as a challenge and an assertion. Nevertheless, his language here remains that of the 1611 translators, and time and again phrases from that translation echo through the work of later writers. The Authorized Version has become a literary work as well as a religious one, thereby confronting later translators with additional difficulty, because the rhythmic power of the prose has been so influential for so long. Not only have subsequent translators had to incorporate changing linguistic usage, changing religious belief and new information provided by Biblical scholars into their translations, but they have also had to deal with their work being compared to what quickly came to be read as the definitive translation.

Once a translation acquires canonical status in a literature, it establishes a precedent that sometimes can be counterproductive for subsequent translators. The Authorized Version of the Bible is one such case, and for some Christians even in the twenty-first century, seventeenth-century English is still seen as the most 'genuine' expression of the Word of God. Another case of a translation that has established itself as definitive is Edward Fitzgerald's *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*. This anonymously published translation first appeared in 1859, but it did not have much impact on the literary scene until later in the century when it began to acquire the almost cult status it now occupies. Fitzgerald adapted the *roba'i* or quatrain and structured some of the Persian poet's work into a sequential long poem about the fleetingness of life and beauty. Fitzgerald knew some Persian, and adapted the Persian verse form, but as his now infamous

comment about how it amused him to take what liberties he chose with his source – 'these Persians ... who really do want a little Art to shape them' – his objective was to produce a domesticated version of an Islamic poet. André Lefevere observes that Fitzgerald would not have been able to do likewise with Greek or Latin poets, partly because of the prestige enjoyed by those literatures and partly also because so many scholars would have been able to correct any inaccuracies (Lefevere, 1992a: 75). However, Fitzgerald's *Rubaiyat* became the second most successful English translation of all time, after the Authorized Version and has so far not been seriously challenged, despite his somewhat cavalier, imperialistic attitude towards his source.

In 1967, the poet Robert Graves collaborated with a classical Persian scholar, Omar Ali-Shah on a new translation. In his preface, Graves is highly critical of Fitzgerald, suggesting that not only was he not competent, but also that he subverted the mysticism of the original into 'a drunkard's rambling profession of the hedonistic creed: "Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die"' (Graves and Ali-Shah, 1967: 2). But this new version, like others, failed to have any impact, and Fitzgerald's poem continues to be read and cited. It is likely that the combination of strong rhyme and rhythm, combined with the *carpe diem* message that struck a chord in the latter years of the British Empire, along with the taste for 'exoticism' that also propelled Rabindranath Tagore to cult status, combined to make the poem so successful. It is also the case that like Shakespeare's plays and the King James Bible, Fitzgerald's heavily rhythmical translation is full of easily memorable lines that have entered the public imagination.

A QUESTION OF TIMING

The success or failure of a translation can also be affected by the historical context in which it first appears. In the case of the *Rubaiyat*, its initial appearance had very little impact, and it was another 20 years before its 'rediscovery' at a time of growing interest in the cultures of the East that Edward Said (1978) has labelled 'Orientalism'. This contentious term is used with reference to what Said claimed was a patronizing and essentializing

Western attitude towards cultures of Asia and the Middle East. The West, according to Said, has constructed its own image of the Orient, which defines it as unstable, underdeveloped and irrational. Seen in this light, Fitzgerald's dismissive remarks about Persian poetry reflect the more broadly held views of his nineteenth-century peers, who contrasted British imperial ideals with what they perceived as Oriental inadequacy.

Fitzgerald appropriated Persian poetry, transforming it into an acceptable domestic product, but other translators, working in other contexts, used translation to assist in the development of national literatures at a time right across Europe when different peoples were struggling to assert their nationhood and demand both political and cultural independence. The remarkable success of Byron and Shakespeare across Europe in the early nineteenth century and their great influence in countries such as Germany, Russia, Poland and Greece, is directly linked to the rise of nationalist movements and to the manner in which readers responded to ways in which those two writers in particular handled the themes of individual challenges to tyrannical authority. Cultures do indeed translate in accordance with need, hence the early nineteenth-century nationalist poets translated works that would resonate with the demands of their own time.

Occasionally, a translation succeeds because it meets a need not anticipated by the translator at all. This was the case with Ezra Pound's *Cathay*, a collection of translations of Chinese poetry that was published in 1915. Pound did not know Chinese, so he sought help from a number of sources, as acknowledged on the title page which reads: *Cathay/For the most part from the Chinese of Rihaku, from the notes of the late Ernest Fenellosa, and the decipherings of the Professors Mori and Ariga.* The translations he produced have been criticized for their inaccuracy, but have also been praised for their remarkable beauty and power. Charles Tomlinson in his book on poetry and metamorphosis, offers a very positive assessment of Pound's achievement:

> The surprising thing about Pound is that, at the stage of *Cathay*, knowing no Chinese, prompted only by the notes of Ernest Fenellosa, faced by a poetry without articles before its nouns, without cases, genders, tenses, he should have intuited so much about the nature of Chinese and primarily its use of the single line placed dramatically against the next single line ... it is Pound's sense of the effect of the line unit that puts him, with *Cathay*, into that select band of translator-poets whose work ... reincorporates a past civilisation into the central artistic effort of their time.
>
> (Tomlinson, 1983: 90)

The best-known translator of Chinese poetry at the time was Arthur Waley, but what distinguishes Pound's translations is his emphasis on imagery, unsurprising since Pound was experimenting with a strongly visual poetry along with other Imagist poets such as H.D. or Amy Lowell and had been working with minimalist Oriental forms such as the Japanese haiku. Eva Hung points out that his ignorance of the Chinese poetic tradition led him to focus on the imagery, adding that a reciprocal cross-cultural fertilization occurred when the Chinese write Hu Shi, who was so inspired by the work of the Imagists, sought to model a new Chinese poetry on their ideas 'without realizing that classical Chinese poetry – the tradition he tried to overthrow – was an essential part of the Imagists "frame of reference"' (Hung, 2000: 226).

However, what determined the success of *Cathay* was that it appeared in the year that the awareness of the full horrors of the First World War was spreading across Europe. Hugh Kenner in his book *The Pound Era* (1973) argues convincingly that the poems were read not so much as exotic Eastern texts, but as war poetry. These lines from 'Lament of the Frontier Guard' (1915) serve to explain why Kenner's hypothesis rings true:

> A gracious spring, turned to blood-ravenous autumn,
> A turmoil of wars, men, spread over the middle kingdom,
> Three hundred and sixty thousand,
> And sorrow, sorrow like rain.
>
> (Pound 1963: 194–5)

The images Pound created of loss and desolation caused by the ravages of pointless warfare enabled readers to reflect on their own times. Pound's knowledge of Chinese may have been weak, but

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the poems he created brought ancient China right into the twentieth century in a way that he could not have anticipated. Commenting on the attacks on Pound for his inaccuracies, Eliot Weinberger defends him vigorously:

> Regardless of its scholarly worth, *Cathay* marked, in T.S. Eliot's words, 'the invention of Chinese poetry in our time'. Rather than stuffing the original into the corset of traditional verse forms, as Fletcher and many others had done, Pound created a new poetry in English drawn from what was unique to the Chinese.
>
> (Weinberger and Paz, 1987: 9).

DANTE IN ENGLISH

Pound may have created a new poetry with his *Cathay*, but there are many cases of writers of great significance in their own cultures whose work fails to achieve similar success in translation. This may of course be due to the poor quality of translations, but it is also due to changing tastes in the receiving literature. Hence, despite great interest in Italian literature for centuries, the greatest Italian poet, Dante Alighieri failed to find an English readership until Henry Francis Cary published his blank verse version in 1814. Cary's decision to replace Dante's *terza rima* with blank verse was approved by the poet, Ugo Foscolo, then resident in London, but in the hundreds of translations made since Cary's, only a few have attempted *terza rima*, most notably Dorothy Sayers in her translation for the Penguin Classics series. Speculation as to why Dante failed to find an English readership earlier, given the success of Petrarch, Boccaccio, Ariosto and Tasso in translation is probably linked to his subject matter: the three books of the *Divina commedia* follow Dante's journey through Hell, Purgatory and Heaven, in a decidedly pre-Reformation, pre-Copernican cosmography. Whereas Petrarch's lyricism could be transposed into other languages, as could the narrating skills of Boccaccio and of the epic romance poets Ariosto and Tasso, Dante's highly politicized religious poem, with its detailed references to people, places and events in his own time, like James Joyce's *Ulysses* centuries later, made more rigorous demands on

readers and tested the ability of translators to sustain readerly interest, hence the number of partial translations, most especially of the *Inferno*.The only reference point in English literary tradition was Milton, and some translations of Dante have decidedly Miltonic overtones. Cary's translation was moderately well-received, but failed to have any impact on English literature. It was not until the twentieth century, with writers like T.S. Eliot and Seamus Heaney that the greatness of Dante could be heard in English-language writers.

There were number of other translations throughout the nineteenth century, the best known of which is by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and many more in the twentieth century. Since Cary, translators have experimented with diverse verse forms and with prose, in their attempts to deal with the difficulty of sustaining an alien verse form over 100 cantos. In her introduction to her translation of *Hell*, Dorothy Sayers provides some information about her translation choices, noting that Dante himself in his *Convivio* had declared that he hated translations. She justifies her choice of *terza rima* on the grounds that it is easy to write bad blank verse and she did not want to risk doing so, but also that rhymed couplets or other stanza forms would have involved her having to organize the order of Dante's stanzas differently, adding:

> I have used all the licence which English poetic tradition allows in the way of half-rhyme, light 'Cockney', identical, and (if necessary) eccentric rhyme, and indeed without these aids, the heavy thump of the masculine rhymes (which predominate in English) would be tiresome.
>
> (Sayers, 1960:57)

Sayers also comments that while English is rich in vowel sounds, it is poor in rhymes in comparison with Italian, and she provides detailed notes on the difference between the two systems. She explains that she has opted for 'thee' and 'thou', but has interpreted liberally the phrase 'in modern English', and has tried to steer a middle course

> between Wardour Street and Hollywood, and to eschew 'Marry, quotha!' without declining upon 'Sezyou!' I have tried to avoid, as far

> as possible, Latinized inversion (especially when they involve ambiguity), poetic clichés and sudden drops into slang or bathos, bearing in mind however, that Dante's own style moves continually from the grand manner to the colloquial, and that nothing could be more unfair to him, or more unlike him, than to iron out all his lively irregularities, into one flat level of dignified commonplace.
>
> (Sayers, 1960:60–61)

Sayers declared herself, as noted earlier, to have been in love with Dante, hence her grand project to translate the entire *Divina commedia*. She died before it could be finished, and it was completed by Barbara Reynolds, the distinguished Italianist. What can be seen from Sayers' version and from her notes and comments on the text is that she was endeavouring to give twentieth-century readers as much information about Dante and his world as she could, and unlike Rieu, she also tried to preserve for readers the experience of reading a poem. Where Rieu opted for prose, Sayers struggled to keep Dante's poem as poetry.

In contrast, the strategy adopted by the Irish poet Ciaran Carson in his version of Dante's *Inferno* is very different. In his preface, Carson acknowledges that he has very little Italian, and so had embarked on the translation by reading translations by other people. The impulse for his version, however, is clearly stated: Carson sees the Florence that exiled Dante, a city torn apart by factions as having a parallel in his native Belfast, riven by the Troubles of the last decades of the twentieth century:

> A British army helicopter is hovering overhead.
>
> As I write, I can hear its rachety interference in the distance; and, not for the first time, I imagine being airborne in the helicopter, like Dante riding on the flying monster Geryon, looking down into the darkness of that place in Hell called Malebolge. 'Rings of ditches, moats, trenches, fosses/ military barriers on every side': I see a map of North Belfast, its no-go zones and tattered flags, the blackened side-streets, cul-de-sacs and bits of wasteland stitched together by dividing walls and fences. For all the blank, abandoned spaces it feels claustrophobic, cramped, medieval. Not as beautiful as Florence, perhaps, but then Florence is 'the most damned of Italian cities, where there is place neither to sit, stand or walk,' according to Ezra Pound.
>
> (Carson, 2002: xi–xii)

Carson's readers are invited to read a poem written in the first decades of the fourteenth century through the lens of late twentieth-century Northern Ireland. Where Sayers tries to give her readers as much information as she can to enable them to move closer towards the original, Carson's translation strategy is one of bringing a work written centuries earlier to contemporary readers in terms shaped by the world he and they inhabit. Like Heaney, Carson sought a particular rhythm and language for his translation, drawing upon both *terza rima* and the Hiberno-English ballad with which he was more familiar.

RESPECT OR IRREVERENCE?

Liz Lochhead, the Scottish playwright and translator uses a wide variety of language registers in her translations, and in the introduction to her version of Molière's *Tartuffe* she describes the language she employs as an invented, theatrical Scots, 'full of anachronisms, demotic speech from various eras ... based on Byron, Burns, Stanley Holloway, Ogden Nash and George Formby, as well as the sharp tongue of my granny' (Lochhead, 1985: i). Asked about her playful language variations in her versions of canonical texts, Lochhead expresses the view that such works are relevant for all times and that what she tries to do is to produce a lucid version for a contemporary audience. When she composes a new version of an Ancient Greek drama she knows that hers is part of a continuum, and that other versions also exist, hence audiences are at liberty to compare and contrast and so see what she has done with the original. But she then suggests that she would like to translate works that have not been translated before into English or Scots, adding that she would 'feel much more of a sense of responsibility' towards the original in such cases, because her version would be the only one available for scrutiny (in González, 2004: 103). Here Lochhead seems to be saying that her translations of canonical works are part of a

continuum of rewritings that enable a translator to feel more free than if he or she were translating a text that had never been translated before. This is an interesting perspective on the long-standing question as to where the primary responsibility of the translator lies: to the source text or to the target audience. Lochhead says that she feels a different sense of responsibility towards a source text depending on whether she is the first translator of it, in which case her work cannot be compared to that of any previous translator. She is therefore not so constrained by the status of the source text, but rather by the absence of other translations against which her work could be compared, so translating a text for the first time sets the translator a different kind of challenge. When she translates texts that have already been translated, she feels less responsibility to her source, and so is freer to experiment.

It is a view shared by many contemporary translators of classical texts. In his introduction to a collection of essays on Greece and Rome in contemporary English poetry, aptly titled 'The Return of the Classics', Stephen Harrison refers to the democratization of classical literature today, through translations, films and television. He argues that contemporary poets have turned to the classics in a spirit less of homage than of appropriation:

> The modern 'deconsecration' of great poetic figures such as Homer and Virgil, in the sense of removing their cultural centrality as canonical and immutable texts generally known and read in their original languages, allows contemporary poets such as Derek Walcott or Seamus Heaney to create new classic works using classical material and an intertextual approach, just as Virgil and Horace created great Latin works through the substantial and subtle reuse of Greek models in Roman contact.
>
> (Harrison, 2009: 15)

Harrison's statement, like Lochhead's, shows just how far creative thinking about translation has moved from the sterile debates about faithfulness and accuracy that bedevilled discussion of translation as a literary practice. Contemporary writers can engage in a relationship with ancient writers without feeling oppressed

by the status conferred by time and canonical positioning, a relationship characterized by respect that is not servile and by a desire to reread and reincarnate texts that would otherwise be inaccessible to all but an elite scholarly community.

5

THE VISIBILITY OF THE TRANSLATOR

HOW VISIBLE ARE TRANSLATORS?

In an autobiographical essay about his own translation practice, the award-winning translator of Juan Goytisolo, Peter Bush, complains about the way in which translators are rendered invisible to readers:

> Most readers of translations prefer not to know, we are told, by most publishers, who prefer to keep the translator stowed out of sight; and most academic translation specialists, who ought to be heralds of the art, prefer to keep their linguistic science unpolluted by the messy, inventive, irksome experiences of professional literary translators engaged in the adventure of multiple rereadings and rewritings of the carefully placed words of another writer in another language.
>
> (Bush, 2006: 23)

Bush challenges this attitude, and his essay is both an attempt to recount how he came to move from teaching modern languages

to becoming a freelance translator and an examination of the complexities of translating. He defines translation as a process of multiple rereadings and rewritings, and he makes a case for the specificity of a translator's reading, or rather read*ings*, arguing that such readings always take place with a double knowledge: the translator reads the text in its original language, but is always aware of the future of that text which is to be rewritten in another language where it will be read as an original. The translator's reading bridges these two versions of the text, these two different originals, 'hovering between what is there on the published page and many drafts of the new writing' (Bush, 2006: 25). What distinguishes a translator's reading is that double awareness; the translator who is reading is engaging in what Bush sees as a process, in which 'ingredients from the subconscious magma of language and experience' (Bush, 2006: 25) are already at work, as the translator starts the task of translating even before he or she has written down a single word. In describing his own translation practice, Bush insists on the multiplicity of readings, drafts and rereadings, offering examples from the eight drafts he produces for one of his translations, as he searches for alternative solutions, responds to comments by the original author, exchanges ideas with Goytisolo's French translator and revises his work in order to move away from the initial literal version of his first draft.

The importance of reading as a prelude to rewriting has often been highlighted by translators and translation theorists, as indeed has the notion of a translation going through several stages. Translators have variously sought to explain their individual translation processes in different ways. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has declared that for her, translation is 'the most intimate act of reading' (Spivak, 2000 [1993]:183) since it involves the coming together of two writers in an engagement she refers to as 'surrender'. Umberto Eco approaches the question from another perspective, noting that his understanding of the complexities of translation comes not only from his work as a translator, but from his experience of having his own writing translated by someone else; that is, watching the process whereby his own writing is transformed into another language. He stresses the importance of the translator-reader as the interpreter of a text; translations, according to Eco 'do

not concern a comparison between two languages, but the interpretation of two texts in two different languages' (Eco, 2001: 14). A translation is therefore the manifestation of one reader's interpretation of a text, the final product of a creative process that may involve many stages of rereading and rewriting. Clive Scott regards translation as '*métissage*, interbreeding, hybridization, grafting, creolization', pointing out the importance of the agency of the translator in this multilingual vortex, where the input of that translator's literariness as a reader and as a writer is as fundamental as the literariness of the original (Scott, 2006: 116). The Greek poet Nasos Vayenas sees translation as the most meticulous form of reading, claiming that translators are the very best readers (Vayenas, 2010: 132). Gabriel García Márquez puts it rather more bluntly: 'Someone said that translating is the best kind of reading. I think that it is also the most difficult, the least recognized and the worst paid' (García Márquez, 2002: 23).

What all these writers and critics share is a belief in the importance of the role of the translator, viewing a translator as both (re)reader and (re)writer. There is greater recognition today of the complexity of the translation process, and in consequence, an increasing emphasis on the important role of the translator. More broadly, with the advent of translation studies, calls for a reassessment of the status of translation and for greater focus on the significance of translation as a shaping force in world literatures have proliferated. As noted earlier in this book, one of the most explicitly politicized arguments has been that advanced by Lawrence Venuti who has demanded a greater visibility for the translator. Venuti's starting point was the low status and low remuneration accorded to translators, particularly in the Anglo-American world, which he links to what he calls the highly-prized illusion of transparency that results in a translation being read as though it were the product of the target culture. Venuti summarizes the process of creating that illusion, whereby a translated text is only judged acceptable by publishers, readers and reviewers when it reads fluently:

> The illusion of transparency is an effect of fluent discourse, of the translator's effort to insure easy readability by adhering to current usage, maintaining continuous syntax, fixing a precise meaning. What is so remarkable here is that this illusory effect conceals the numerous conditions under which the translation is made, starting with the translator's crucial intervention in the foreign text. The more fluent the translation, the more invisible the translator, and, presumably, the more visible the writer or meaning of the foreign text.
>
> (Venuti, 1995: 1–2)

The invisibility of the translator can also be determined by the level of individualism that informs the concept of authorship in a given culture at a particular time. If a foreign text is reconfigured in such a way as to erase the signs of its foreignness in order to make it acceptable to the target audience, then, according to Venuti, this has the potential to lead to the wholesale domestication of a foreign text; in such circumstances the act of translation involves 'an appropriation of foreign cultures for domestic agendas, cultural, economic, political' (Venuti, 1995: 18). Venuti even goes so far as to challenge the grand old man of American Bible translation, Eugene Nida, whose concept of dynamic or functional equivalence in translation has been so influential. He argues that Nida also advocated domestication as a central translation strategy, a tactic that links translation to missionary activity, and hence to the diffusion of Western Christian ideology. Venuti attacks domestication as an undesirable expression of a complacent culture, unwilling to engage with otherness.

Not all translators, however, share Venuti's view. For example, Eliot Weinberger, in an essay entitled 'Anonymous Sources' argues in favour of the invisible translator, though he too criticizes the practice of many reviewers who write about translated texts without ever mentioning the name of the translator. The anonymity of translation, Weinberger claims, is the joy of translation because the translator is operating on the level of language 'attempting to invent similar effects, to capture the essential, without the interference of the otherwise all-consuming ego' (Weinberger, 2002: 114). Translation, according to Weinberger is the greatest education in how to write, yet it is also 'a prison in the sense that everything is said and must now be re-said' (Weinberger, 2002: 114). Unsurprisingly, for someone who

worked closely with Octavio Paz for many years, as translator and collaborator, Weinberger agrees with Paz's view that translation and creation are twin processes, with the translator 'liberating' the original text. He also insists that a translation is not inferior to an original, and castigates those critics whose model of translation is based on what he sees as a utopian ideal of absolute fidelity to a source text. In his concluding paragraph, he makes a case for the flexibility of translation, insisting that each translation is a different reading of an original and, significantly, suggesting that translators should keep retranslating:

> Everything worth translating should be translated as many times as possible, even by the same translator, for you can never step into the same original twice. Poetry is that which is worth translating, and translation is what keeps literature alive. Translation is change and motion; literature dies when it stays the same, when it has no place to go.
>
> (Weinberger, 2002: 118)

The point being made here is not only that translation ensures the survival of texts, as Walter Benjamin also proposed, but also that since a translation is a manifestation of one translator's reading, and all readings change over time, as do the contexts in which readings take place, so translators need to ensure that they too keep on rereading and retranslating. A translation, according to Weinberger, cannot be inferior to an original, but it can be inferior to other translations, written or not yet written, hence the need to recognize that texts move as contexts change and can never remain static.

CHINESE POETRY: MAKING THE OTHER VISIBLE

Venuti's *The Translator's Invisibility* was a call for action to improve the lot of translators, and also to raise awareness of the value of other literary and cultural traditions beyond the Anglo-American sphere. When it was published, in 1995, at a time when translation studies was only just starting to become recognized, it made an important contribution to debates about the

status of translation. The problem with his advocacy of foreignization as a desirable translation strategy, however, is that different genres and text-types are both translated and received very differently. As will be discussed in the next chapter, retention of signs of the foreign in non-literary texts would not make sense, while there are sharp distinctions between the ways in which translators of poetry, prose and drama operate. Francis Jones has examined the professional habitus of literary translators, and reminds us that while distinguished poets often translate other poets, novels tend to be translated by professional translators. He believes that this fact is linked to the way in which poetry tends to be seen as having a special communicative purpose that demands 'high, autonomously wielded expertise – even impossibly high, as shown in the popular discourse of translation loss' (Jones, 2011: 179–80); hence poetry translation tends to be seen as 'creative', in contrast to other text types. Jones comments that despite poetry comprising a very small percentage of published translations, case studies and examples taken from poetry translation have tended to dominate theoretical discussions of translating more generally. He also notes the importance of poetry translators as editors, since they often select poems or poets for anthologies, adding also that they frequently include paratextual material such as prefaces, notes, and commentaries. John Balcom, a translator of Chinese poetry, exemplifies this practice, and in an essay on translating modern Chinese poetry he begins by asking how intelligible and accessible to readers even the most fluent translation may be if readers have no understanding of the larger cultural context in which the original work was produced. He defines his role as being one of assisting his readers, not only with the linguistic aspects of the poems he translates, but also with their extra-linguistic features: 'the intertextuality, allusion, traditional poetic form and structure, forms of wordplay peculiar to the Chinese language, and in some cases the interplay between text and other art forms such as painting ... ' (Balcom, 2006: 120).

The problem of helping readers with broader contextual material is particularly acute in poetry translation, because the kinds of devices used by translators of prose or play-texts, which range

from glossaries to additional explanatory sentences or omissions of problematical points, may be unsuited to the formal constraints posed by a poem. Some translators of prose may use a substitution strategy as Adriana Hunter did, when she translated Frédéric Beigbeder's satirical novel, *99 francs*. This novel about the world of advertising and consumerism was translated into English as *£9.99*, and substituted all the French references to trendy Parisian shops, restaurants, or brand names with 'equivalent' London ones. Hunter's translation is an extreme example of cultural substitution, but justifiable in that without her intervention, the subtleties of the contextual references of Beigbeder's novel would have remained opaque for readers unfamiliar with the world he created.

Willis Barnstone is the author of 'An ABC of Translating Poetry', in which he declares that the prerequisite for translating a poem is that the translator must be a poet. That poet has both the responsibility of creating a new poem for readers eager to discover, and to remain mindful of the individuality of, the source language poet. He compares translation to the creation of poetry within a very formal framework, as is the case, for example, with the Welsh *cynghaneddion*, a strictly regulated collection of poetic forms that involve a structured repetition and accentuation of consonants and requiring a specialized poetic vocabulary, or with classical Chinese poetic composition. Barnstone notes: 'The Chinese call the method of the great Tang poets of working imaginatively while being bound by strictures, "dancing in chains"' (Barnstone,1993: 270). The translator has to learn to dance, while confined by the chains of the original, and this is the great paradox of much poetry translation. Eliot Weinberger, as we have seen, regards poetry as existing in a perpetual state of transformation, that is, of translation and argues that:

> The transformations that take shape in print, that take the formal name of 'translation', become their own beings, set out on their own wanderings. Some live long, and some don't. What kind of creatures are they? What happens when a poem, once Chinese and still Chinese, becomes a piece of English, Spanish, French poetry?
>
> (Weinberger and Paz, 1987: 1)

To explore these wanderings, Weinberger and Octavio Paz assembled 19 versions, referred to as 'incarnations' of a single poem by the Buddhist poet, painter and calligrapher, Wang Wei (*c.* 700–61 AD) in one slim volume, *Nineteen Ways of Looking at Wang Wei*. The book is structured with a version of the poem on the left, and a comment by Weinberger on the facing page, and with a final essay by Paz that includes his own translation. Weinberger starts out with a brief clarification:

> Poetry is that which is worth translating.
>
> For example, this four-line poem, 1200 years old: a mountain, a forest, the setting sun illuminating a patch of moss. It is a scrap of literary Chinese, no longer spoken as its writer spoke it. It is a thing, forever itself, inseparable from its language.
>
> (Weinberger and Paz, 1987: 1)

The first of the 19 versions are the Chinese characters, although Weinberger points out that the original poem, which was lost, formed part of a massive horizontal landscape scroll. The painting was copied for centuries, but the only surviving copy dates from the seventeenth century. He also points out that the Chinese text is read from left to right, and from top to bottom, and that some of the characters resist definitive interpretation. This means that the visual dimension of the original has vanished forever. However, formal properties remain: the poem is written in four lines of five syllables, the second line rhyming with the fourth. The second version is a transliteration, although here too Weinberger provides information that disconcerts, such as the statement that Chinese has the least number of sounds of any major language, and relies instead on shifts of tone. This means, he argues, that rhyme is inevitable and Western metre impossible. Version three is a character by character translation, and Weinberger notes that a single character may be noun, verb or adjective, and may even produce contradictory readings. He gives the example of character 2 in line 2 that can either be *jing* (brightness) or *ying* (shadow). He also notes that the absence of tenses in Chinese verbs is a particular problem for Western translators. Weinberger thus establishes the difficulties facing any translator of Chinese into a

Western language and acknowledges that some aspects of Chinese will be resistant to translation.

As he comments on the translations, the first of which dates from 1919, Weinberger offers critical insights into what different translators have done with the poem. He notes cases where translators try to 'improve' on the original, cases where personal pronouns are added, either 'I' or 'we', which are absent from the Chinese, and he complains about translations by scholars who cannot write poetry, although he is slightly less unkind to those poets who have no Chinese. He is particularly scathing of the translation by Chang Yin-nan and Lewis C. Walmsley from 1958, which he attacks on the grounds that the translators demonstrate 'unspoken contempt for the foreign poet' (Weinberger and Paz, 1987: 17). He dislikes heavily rhymed versions that read as doggerel. Understandably, he admires the free verse versions by Kenneth Rexroth and Gary Snyder, both well-known translators of Chinese poetry and he also acknowledges the work of the French translator François Cheng. What is fascinating for readers is to follow the various translations of this one small poem and to note the vast differences, not only in style, form and mood, but in the interpretation of what is actually going on in the poem. For although there are a series of nouns 'forest, mountain, shadow, moss, lichen, person or people' and adjectives 'empty, green, blue, deep' what is not consistent across the translations is the manner of assembling of those words into images. Each translator positions himself differently, and each one constructs a slightly different picture of the woodland scene. In his essay, which is a comment on his own translation, Paz explains his choice of metre, his own use of rhyme and the research he undertook before embarking on his version, which included reading translations from the Chinese by both Pound and Arthur Whaley. In the absence of a tradition of translating Chinese poetry into either Spanish or Portuguese, Paz had to find his own solutions, and he relates how he found his own way forward through a recognition of the importance of parallelism in Chinese literature, a parallelism that 'links, however slightly, our own indigenous Mexican poetry with that of China' (Weinberger and Paz, 1987: 47).

FINDING A LINK WITH THE TEXT

Paz's comparison of ancient Chinese writing with indigenous Mexican poetry finds an echo in Seamus Heaney's preface to his translation of *Beowulf* (1999). Heaney describes his encounters with the poem, first studying it in an Anglo-Saxon class as an undergraduate, then, years later, trying and failing to produce a translation with which he could feel satisfied. Only when he thought that he had found the right language register, a language with which he felt at ease, was he able to translate *Beowulf* for contemporary readers. Heaney's translation uses Anglo-Irish words, and one example he gives is his deliberate choice of the word 'bawn', a word that derives from the Irish for fortified dwellings, built by English planters. In justifying his decision to refer to Hrothgar's keep as a bawn, Heaney comments:

> Every time I read the lovely interlude that tells of the minstrel singing in Heorot just before the first attacks of Grendel, I cannot help thinking of Edmund Spenser in Kilcolman Castle, reading the early cantos of *The Faerie Queene* to Sir Walter Raleigh, just before the Irish would burn the castle and drive Spenser out of Munster back to the Elizabethan court. Putting a bawn into *Beowulf* seems one way for an Irish poet to come to terms with that complex history of conquest and colony, absorption and resistance, integrity and antagonism, a history that has to be clearly acknowledged by all concerned in order to render it ever more 'willable forward/again and again and again'.
>
> (Heaney, 1999: xxx)

The word 'bawn' is therefore highly charged with historical significance in the Irish context. Here, for example, is how Heaney introduces the word at a critical moment, when the mother of Grendel, the monster Beowulf has killed, comes to Heorot seeking bloody revenge:

> There was uproar in Heorot. She had snatched their trophy,
> Grendel's bloodied arm. It was a fresh blow
> To the afflicted bawn.
>
> (Heaney, 1999: 43)

Heaney's use of indigenous language might appear to be a deliberate foreignization device, but here the foreignization serves to accentuate the presence of the translator and his habitus, a reminder to readers that Heaney, the translator of what is regarded as the first great written epic in the English language, is not English, but Irish. Heaney is not only translating an Anglo-Saxon poem, he is doing so with an awareness of the history of the descendants of the Anglo-Saxons and of the relationship between the Irish and the English. His reference to Spenser is telling, for although Spenser was a great English Renaissance poet, he also wrote *A View of the Present State of Ireland* in 1596, urging the subjugation of the Irish. Heaney's insistence on using a language that carries with it traces of his own history is a characteristic of his poems and translations, as is the way that he so often says that the key to a particular piece of writing came to him through sound. Describing how he found the right note for his translation of *Antigone* for the Abbey Theatre in Dublin in 2003 after a long period of difficulty, he writes: 'Then suddenly, as if from nowhere, I heard the note. Theme and tune coalesced. What came into my mind, or more precisely into my ear, were the opening lines of a famous eighteenth-century Irish poem' (Heaney, 2009: 135). The connection Heaney was able to make was between the Greek tragedy of a young woman forbidden to bury her dead brother, and 'The Lament for Art O'Leary', a poem by the widow of an Irishman murdered by a group of English soldiers in 1773 and left by the roadside. Both men's bodies had been abandoned, and both the play and the song revolve around the passionate grief of their outraged womenfolk. Significantly, Heaney changed the title of his play to *The Burial at Thebes* 'to signal to a new audience what the central concern of the play is going to be' (Heaney, 2009: 139).

In his autobiographical essay, 'Mossbawn', Heaney writes about his development as a poet, starting with a powerful image of the translation of sound:

> I would begin with the Greek word, *omphalos*, meaning the navel, and hence the stone that marked the centre of the world, and repeat it, *omphalos, omphalos, omphalos* until its blunt and falling music becomes the music of somebody pumping water at the pump outside our back door. It is Co. Derry in the early 1940s. The American bombers groan towards the aerodrome at Toomebridge, the American troops manoeuvre in the fields along the road, but all of the great historical action does not disturb the rhythms of the yard.
>
> (Heaney, 1980: 17)

The world of Ancient Greece and the everyday world of rural Ireland fuse in language, and the sound of water being pumped outside the house is transformed into the Greek *omphalos*. In this way, the parochial becomes universal, while the profound and the ordinary become indistinguishable. Heaney, as a Nobel Laureate is obviously going to be a visible presence in whatever text he translates, but what is significant is that he does not make distinctions between original writing and translating in his poetic practice, regarding both activities as existing within a single continuum. This is another aspect of poetry translation worthy of note: many poets choose to translate as a logical next stage in their writerly development. Ezra Pound's poems and translations flow together seamlessly in his magnum opus, the *Cantos*, Ted Hughes was a prolific translator, and more recently, Simon Armitage has started to tackle not only Homer's *Odyssey*, adapting it for radio, but also the alliterative Morte d' Arthure (published as *The Death of King Arthur*, 2012) and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (2007). Just as Heaney recasts Anglo-Saxon epic and Ancient Greek drama in terms of his own Irish heritage, so Armitage highlights the relationship he feels with the anonymous Northern medieval poets. In his introduction to *Sir Gawain* he explains his interest in translating the poem in terms of his own poetic career and his Northern heritage:

> To the untrained eye, it is as if the poem were lying beneath a thin coat of ice, tantalizingly near and yet frustratingly blurred. To a contemporary poet, one interested in narrative and form, and to a northerner who not only recognizes plenty of the poem's dialect but who detects an echo of his own speech rhythms within the original, the urge to blow a little warm breath across that layer of frosting eventually proved irresistible.
>
> (Armitage, 2007: vi–vii)

Poets such as Armitage and Heaney assert their presence in their translations, and through their paratextual comments they also clarify their engagement with the texts they have chosen to translate. Translation in these cases is not a separate writerly activity, it is part of these individual writers' continuous poetic practice and they are as visible in their translations as in the rest of their writing.

BORGES AND TRANSLATION

Jorge Luís Borges, who was multilingual, had strong views on translation. In an article published in 1946, he declared that he was 'not one of those who mystically prejudge that every translation is inferior to the original', adding that he had often confirmed the exact opposite (Borges, in Kristal, 2002: 11). Borges took the view that what mattered to a writer was what he termed the 'perfectability' of a work, 'and not the fact that it may have originated from himself or from others' (in Kristal, 2002: 9). In his essay, 'The Homeric Versions' he praises translation, suggesting that individual translations provide a documentation of the changes undergone by texts over time. Considering *The Iliad*, Borges comments that although the events of the plot have survived, we have no way of knowing what Homer actually thought about his creation. The present state of Homer's writings, Borges contends, 'is like a complex equation that represents the precise relations of unknown quantities', adding that this means that 'there is no possible greater richness for the translator' (Borges, 2002 [1992]: 17). He compares passages from four versions of *The Iliad*: Cowper's from 1791, Pope's from 1725, Chapman's from 1614 and Butler's literal prose version from 1900, and asks which of these can be considered the most faithful, answering himself straight away by declaring:

> None or all of them. If fidelity to Homer refers to Homer's imaginations and the irrecoverable men and days that he portrayed, none of them are faithful for us, but all of them would be for a tenth-century Greek.
>
> (Borges, 2002 [1992]: 19)

Borges' theory of translation as a process that is simply part of an endless cycle of rereading and rewriting is at its clearest, and most amusing, in his short story 'Pierre Menard, author of the *Quixote*' (1939). This entertaining story is supposedly written by an erudite narrator who explains the method used by one Pierre Menard, who sets himself the task of recomposing *Don Quixote*. Menard does not want to embark on anything so base as a mechanical transcription of the original or a mere copy: what he sets out to do is to produce a text that coincides word-for-word and line-for-line with Cervantes' novel. His is not to be a translation, but a new (identical) version. The narrator explains pompously how he sets about this task: 'Initially, Menard's method was to be relatively simple: Learn Spanish, return to Catholicism, fight against the Moor or Turk, forget the history of Europe from 1602–1918 – *be* Miguel de Cervantes' (Borges, 1998: 94). Menard does indeed produce parts of a *Quixote*, although after ripping up thousands of pages and endlessly correcting drafts, very little of his great work has survived and the narrator explains that it is he who has had to try and reconstruct some of it. Nevertheless, the narrator attempts to analyse two versions of one passage, contrasting Cervantes' writing with what he asserts to be Menard's infinitely better fragments of text. He quotes a sample sentence from both versions, contrasting the style and the content, dismissing Cervantes and extolling Menard, although as readers we can see that both passages are identical. What Borges does so brilliantly in this absurdist story is to satirize academic pretentiousness and theorizing about the faithfulness of translation, as well as highlighting the impossibility of an identical translation of any text.

In an essay from 1935 on translations of the *Thousand and One Nights*, Borges expands his ideas about translation and translators, arguing that he prefers an unfaithful translation where the translator's intervention can be clearly seen, to a more faithful one that is subservient to the source, and is particularly scornful about the German translation by the scholarly Enno Littman. What surfaces again and again in Borges' comments is his belief in the creativity of the translator, which is linked to his vision of writing as an endless cycle of drafting, rereading and rewriting. In *The Homeric Versions* he makes this vision clear: 'To assume that every

recombination of elements is necessarily inferior to its original form is to assume that draft nine is necessarily inferior to draft H – for there can only be drafts' (Borges, 2002 [1992]: 15).

VISIBILITY AND SOURCES

Prefaces provided by translators not only give readers information about the genesis of a translation, but also reveal the strategies that they have adopted. The use of paratextual material such as prefaces or notes serves to highlight the agency of the translator. In the preface to her collection of poems by classical women poets, Josephine Balmer not only writes about how she came to select and then translate the women represented in the book, but she also provides a historical account of the changing importance of women in the ancient world. Following the hypothesis that women writers tended to flourish in 'decentralized cultures', but disappeared when there was a strong centralized power and where poetry came to be seen as prestigious, Balmer traces the history of women's poetry in Ancient Greece, although she is mindful of the difficulty of employing such a modern categorization in relation to writers from another age. She suggests that thematic and functional similarities can be traced in the work of classical women poets, and makes a case for the presence of certain discernible linguistic patterns in their writing such as wordplay, punning and neologisms. Having identified certain stylistic and thematic aspects of the poets she has selected, the question, then, is how to translate them for contemporary readers. Balmer's solution is to look for guidance from contemporary women poets and, following Barbara Godard's exhortation to women translators to 'woman-handle' a text, to flaunt her presence as the translator by means of footnotes and commentary. Since many of the poems only exist in fragmentary form, Balmer has devised a system of signs to indicate points where she has directly intervened:

> ( ) denotes a conjectural meaning
> ... denotes a break in the papyrus
> *denotes the end of a fragment
>
> (Balmer, 1996: 22)

Balmer's translations are characterized by the way in which she includes scholarly material written for non-specialist readers as a means of enabling them to understand more about the source text and its culture and to see what has happened during the translation process. She has also translated Catullus, the Latin poet frequently translated in the twentieth century, although mainly by men, who is admired for his 'modernity' and for his combination of erudition, poetic skill and dirty-mindedness. As Balmer points out in the introduction to her *Catullus: Poems of Love and Hate* the principal problems facing any translator of the Roman poet are the shifts of tone and register: the ways in which he moves from using obscene colloquialisms to fashioning a language of great beauty in a poetry that played with established forms and introduced metrical innovations, and that was alternatively tender and crudely funny (Balmer, 2004a). She also raises another important issue for a translator: the authenticity of the source text, since the history of the Catullus manuscripts is a tortuous one. Only one known poem survived until the fourteenth century, when a manuscript containing 116 poems was discovered in Verona, in a manuscript that disappeared again a few years later. As Balmer points out,

> the text we now have is based on three surviving second- or third-hand copies, each one packed with textual errors and savagely emended by scholars over the centuries, but similar enough to lead them to believe that the words on the page are as close as we might hope to get to Catullus' own.
>
> (Balmer, 2004a: 11)

In the absence of a clearly identifiable original, like other classical translators such as Ezra Pound or Tony Harrison, Balmer argues that she has no alternative but to become a strong, visible presence through her translation. The translator has to determine firstly what the source text is, and has to take editorial decisions based on a sound understanding of the debates about the fortunes of that text over time. In short, when a translator has no way of communicating with the original author, that translator has to take the responsibility of deciding what constitutes the original

upon which to base the translation. Where there are considerable manuscript variations, the translator has to choose, and if there is a contentious history of how a text has been interpreted, the translator has to take sides.

VISIBILITY AND IDEOLOGY

Jón Karl Helgason's book on English translations of Norse sagas, *The Rewriting of Njáls Saga* is subtitled *Translation, Politics and Icelandic Sagas*, and is a study of the ways in which a text can be used for very different ideological purposes at different times. Helgason's first chapter, which outlines the convoluted history of the version of *Njáls Saga* that we know today, opens with a quotation from Borges' story, 'The Garden of Forking Paths', an image used to discuss the long tradition of rewritings of the 'original' saga from its first manuscript appearance around 1280. Helgason points out, however, that the very term 'original' is misleading, since 'we can safely assume that the first written text had various written and oral sources' (Helgason, 1999: 19). He divides the reception of *Njáls Saga* into distinct periods: the first runs from the thirteenth century through to 1593, the date when Arngrímur Jónsson published his *Brevis commentarius de Islandia* that brought Icelandic culture to the attention of intellectuals across Northern Europe. Through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the majority of saga manuscripts were taken to libraries in Denmark and Sweden, with the first edition of *Njáls Saga* being printed in Copenhagen in 1772.

Later, Icelandic nationalists were to press for the return of these manuscripts, whose cultural capital had risen with the expansion of Icelandic nationalist sentiments (Iceland finally became independent from Denmark in 1944). The nineteenth century saw mounting interest in the sagas outside Iceland, and the emergence of what Helgason defines as 'Teutonism', which he sees as 'the flip side of Orientalism' (Helgason, 1999: 30), a view whose very distance cannot avoid introducing the observer's own cultural distortions into the equation. Along with debates about the veracity of the sagas (were they history or literature or a combination of both?) were post-Romantic theories of the Germanic

origins of Northern European peoples, taken to extremes during the Third Reich, when the Icelandic sagas were widely translated and taught in German schools as examples of the greatness of a pan-Teutonic past.

In England too, the nineteenth century witnessed what can only be described as an Icelandic craze, with the appearance of translations of the sagas, adaptations for children, and a steady stream of travel accounts. George Webbe Dasent brought out his translation of *Njáls Saga* in 1861, which rapidly acquired canonical status, and Helgason notes its significance:

> *Njáls Saga* – in its 'English garb' (Dasent, 1861) – was neither presented nor perceived as belonging essentially to 'other' culture; the saga's success was based on the conception that Icelandic medieval history was, in its very nature, like parts of early and even contemporary British history.
>
> (Helgason, 1999: 47)

Through the medium of translation, the sagas were used to construct a version of history that directly linked the contemporary with an idealized past. The physical strength and endurance of the men and women of the sagas could be connected to social ideals of the present, and Dasent's translations reinforced the myth of the Germanic racial and cultural origins of the British people. Helgason examines the great number of editions, translations, commentaries and works deriving from the sagas and suggests that the very act of rewriting might 'in some sense, be regarded as a psychological obsession' (Helgason, 1999: 9). The great vogue for Iceland and for the sagas arose out of nationalist ideologies in the nineteenth century and was then appropriated by the extremes of National Socialism in Germany in the 1930s. However, since Icelandic independence in the postwar period, the sagas have been read differently, this time as great works of literature that, according to Jesse L. Byock, 'equipped Iceland with a cultural heritage worthy of its status as an independent nation' (Byock, 1994: 118). The history of the translation of Icelandic sagas shows the impossibility of teasing apart aesthetic criteria from the socio-political context

in which translators were very visibly engaged. As Edwin Gentzler puts it:

> What becomes apparent when analysing the evolution of one text in history, viewing its multiple forms and the processes of reintegration into different historical epochs, are not the eternal verities of the original, but the mechanisms of history which mask any sense of the original at all.
>
> (Gentzler, 2001: 196)

In an essay on 'Translation Practice in Poetry and Drama', the classical scholar Lorna Hardwick looks at ways in which some modern writers engage with ancient texts for their own ends, creating a new work through which the source text may not even be clearly discernible. She suggests that there are two distinct phases in translation: the first is the point where writers and dramatists engage directly with the ancient material as readers and spectators, while the second phase is where new readers and spectators engage with the reconstituted material. This results in new maps being drawn of new material 'into which the ancient is interwoven, and to which the accretion of texts known either to the ancient author or to the modern (or both) can adhere' (Hardwick, 2009: 192). The question for Hardwick is, then, how to talk about the palimpsest which is the new text, an important problem given the negative associations of the word 'translation' with ideas of 'accuracy', 'faithfulness' and 'reproduction'. Earlier, in her book, *Translating Words, Translating Cultures* (2000) Hardwick examined ways in which the translation of ancient texts can become transformative in changing cultural contexts, and she argued that:

> The cultural politics of the debates surrounding translations and the shift in norms which they reveal hinge on changing perceptions of fidelity, equivalence and appropriation. These open up the whole question of the kinds of cultural operations which are involved when writing moves across the borders between the cultural authority of the ancient text and the modern positions and practices with which translation must engage.
>
> (Hardwick, 2000: 79)

As we saw earlier, the translation of poetry has received far more attention than other forms of translation, both in terms of theorizing and in writing about practice. This is partly because so many poets have translated and have written about their experiences, but principally because poetic discourse is language thickened, language made strange and unfamiliar, as words are transformed into specific patterns; therefore, regardless of whether a poem originates in another language or not, the shaping processes of poetry-making come into play. Those shaping processes can be traced more apparently in translations, as summarized aptly by Matthew Reynolds in *The Poetry of Translation*, where he suggests that 'what literary translation captures is not simply in the source text but is brought into being by the continuous process of reading-and-making-sense-and-translating' (Reynolds, 2011: 29). Reynolds' book, which looks at translation from Chaucer to Christopher Logue, is an important work in that he not only reassesses the role played by translation in literature in English, but he also highlights the creativity of the translator. Translators engage with a source text and with their intended readers, seeking to provide not an identical text, but a poem that is both a rendering of another poem and a new poem in its own right. Reynolds struggles to articulate 'this-whatever-it-is' that is the new poem, brought into being through the collaboration that is translation, and notes tellingly that 'theory founders before the process in which sense, or whatever we should call it, "sense" seeming too narrow a word-emerges from a text in collaboration with its readers' (Reynolds, 2011: 29–30).

It might seem paradoxical that on the one hand, translators of classical works may appear to be more constrained than translators of newly written works, given that their versions can be compared with those of their predecessors and measured against them, while on the other hand, classical translators are also free to experiment, to innovate and reimagine a work anew. The translation of ancient texts demands the intervention of the translator not only as both a reader and a writer, but also as a scholar and as editor, given that often there is no consensus on the question of what constitutes an original. As Nasos Vayenas puts it, for the

translator of poetry, 'the original is the experience, and the process of translation is the creative act' (Vayenas, 2010: 131).

I prefer to use Lefevere's term 'rewriting', which is a neater way of expressing Reynolds' 'reading-and-making-sense-and-translating', while also addressing Hardwick's concern about the palimpsestic nature of the target text. Whether we are looking at 19 versions of Wang Wei or at Seamus Heaney's reworking of Anglo-Saxon or Ancient Greek texts, it is also clear that what we are reading are examples of different rewritings by different individuals. Sometimes, as Josephine Balmer's work shows, the translator has had to engage in extensive research in order to determine what constitutes an original text before even beginning a translation.

Translations are visible traces of individual readings. The issue is not that the translator is invisible, but rather that in judging translations, critical opinion has opted to render the translator invisible by stressing the significance of the original over its translation. Tony Harrison, in the preface to his translation of Molière's *The Misanthrope* defines translation as a process of flowering and decay, another version of the organic metaphor of transplantation so often used by translators. This idea of the fixity of a text, as he so aptly puts it, is the illusion of pedantry. Translations, he argues, are not built to survive indefinitely, rather they belong to a particular moment in time, but what translation can do is to 'reinvigorate' its original by the very fact of its decay (Harrison, 1991a: 146).

6

REDEFINING TRANSLATION IN A GLOBAL AGE

TOWARDS A NEW PARADIGM

The technological revolution which accelerated so rapidly with the advent of the Internet, combined with the increased mobility of populations, has brought about great changes in international communication. This has led to an increasing demand for translation and for greater intercultural understanding, which in turn has resulted in a proliferation of translator-training programmes around the world. Translators and interpreters are needed to facilitate international exchanges, both commercial and political, and at the same time ever more sophisticated machine-translation programmes are being developed to cope with the growing body of material that requires translation. Along with globalization, transnationalism is now a widely employed term, used so broadly that we can talk about transnational globalization strategies on the one hand, and a transnational anti-globalization movement on the other. These increasingly sophisticated technological developments have major implications in the sphere of news-gathering

where the demand for the production of translated material coincides with the demand for 24-hour breaking news reports. Today, images can be sent from crime or disaster scenes instantaneously, as happened, for example, with the tsunamis in Thailand in 2004 and Japan in 2011, while individuals trapped in conflict zones can send out globally accessible and relatively unmediated accounts direct from wherever they find themselves. Such technological facilitation means that rather than bringing news to people who might otherwise be ignorant of world events, news reporting today has to keep pace with the increasingly significant role played by individuals caught up in those events. Where reporting requires translation, the pressures on translators are therefore increased.

Minako O'Hagan and David Ashworth, authors of *Translation-Mediated Communication in a Digital World: Facing the Challenges of Globalization and Localization* (2002) suggest that the technological changes affecting modes of communication are so all-encompassing that they will have a significant impact on the profession of translators and interpreters, probably leading to the emergence of new professions altogether. They point out that the fastest-growing area in the translation sector today is the recreation of websites in different language versions, known as 'web localization', adding that:

> The traditional forms of language support we have known as translation and interpretation are faced with new challenges that come from the new contexts for human communication and interactions afforded by technology. Furthermore, new modes of communication over the Internet are continuing to develop: from static text on computer screens, to short messages on cell phone displays and personal digital assistants, from e-mail to synchronous chat in text or voice ... This multiplicity in types of electronic documents defines a new kind of literacy, variously called electronic or digital literacy.
>
> (O'Hagan and Ashworth, 2002: ix–x)

O'Hagan and Ashworth's book develops their framework of 'Translation-Mediated Communication' (TMC) within CMC, or Computer-Mediated Communication. They maintain that a

paradigm shift is occurring, with the worldwide move from industrial societies to information societies, necessitating different forms of translation and interpretation. They use the terminology of '**teletranslation**' and 'teleinterpretation', to indicate a reorientation of translation as it has been traditionally understood from a frame-by-frame approach (word-for-word translation) towards a scene-by-scene approach: that is, they use visual metaphors to chart a move from translating words to translating more complex semiotic systems. Their book is a useful introduction to a complex field, and their basic proposition, that translation is becoming a more hybrid activity requiring new sets of skills, raises interesting questions. In addition to the linguistic, literary and cultural skills demanded of traditional translators, a reoriented notion of translation will also demand far greater technological skills, and will also become more interactive. This could mean, for example, that a translator could be required to work as part of a team, of the sort that is already in existence in large international companies, or it could mean that the traditional expectations of translator competence will have to be revised.

Moreover, since the sharp distinction that once existed between speech and writing has become steadily more blurred during the last half century or so, the traditional distinction between translating and interpreting is also far less clear, a point that a number of theorists of interpreting, notably Daniel Gile, have been arguing for some time. One major difference, of course, is that an interpreter, such as those employed in the European Community, for example, operates in real time, sitting in a booth listening to what is being said in one language, and reproducing that speech instantaneously in another, whereas translators have worked to a different time pattern, sitting at a desk and writing out their new version of the written text. Now, with electronic media accelerating the pace of communication, translators too can be faced with working in real time on the Internet. There is no doubt that technological advances are altering how people communicate and process information, and that translation as a profession is having to adjust accordingly. In his essay on website localization, Anthony Pym questions what the increasing use of language technology will mean for professional translators who have been

trained to carry out what he calls 'straight translation' and are now faced with having to adjust their practice (Pym, 2011: 410). Writing in 2011, Pym argues that anything written about website translation is likely to become out of date even before it is printed because the field is moving so rapidly. He also draws attention to research into how we read websites, where the verbal content is just one element in a semiotic system than also includes visual images, and raises a more general question about the translation of that verbal component:

> What this means for translation is not always clear. If content is not going to be read with any significant attention, should it be translated with any degree of care? Perhaps the most significant consequence of use patterns is that the design of the webpage is at least as important as its linguistic content. A webpage cannot be designed or written in the same way as a printed page. It should be built for use, not just for reading.
>
> (Pym, 2011: 417)

TELEVISION NEWS TRANSLATION

Claire Tsai, former Taiwanese television news translator and broadcaster has written a blow-by-blow account of her work as a translator in a television newsroom. In her essay, Tsai recounts how her average day unfolded, what her tasks were, what the time constraints might be and what the processes and strategies behind television news translation really are. She emphasizes that her company name card did not include the word 'translator', her title being just 'Writer in the International News Centre', yet she notes that a large part of her work involved 'translating, adapting, rewriting and editing' (Tsai, 2005: 148). This reluctance to use the word 'translator' reflects once again the low status of translation in many parts of the world, despite it being essential to the operation of FTV (Formosa Television). In Tsai's newsroom, translators worked in teams, round the clock, with each translator being assigned three news items and given roughly two hours to translate each recorded item. Tsai tells us that in cases of breaking

news, a translator may have to hand in a brief account of the story within only 15 minutes, expanding the story later for another transmission. The translation was then handed to the director for proof-reading, review or correction, and then the translator moved to the film-editing room to work on the final phase of the assignment: 'to read out the script and record it onto a tape as a voice-over and edit the film based on the feeds available or the video archive if necessary' (Tsai, 2005: 146). In some cases, where staffing levels are high, the translator might not be involved in the film-editing process, but Tsai's work required her to multitask, as she puts it, and to take part in all the stages from initial receipt of the assignment to putting it out on air.

Based on her working practice, Tsai's account poses a number of important questions, whose relevance has a much more general application. She draws parallels between what a news translator and an interpreter do, suggesting that there are similarities in their practice:

> Given the time constraints, a television news translator needs to produce a target text almost instantaneously with or without transcripts. The first stage in television news translation to a certain extent resembles interpreting in that both the translator and the interpreter are chasing the 'deadline' while being burdened with a heavy mental load.
>
> (Tsai, 2005: 147)

The time constraints under which the television news translator has to work resemble more closely the constraints of interpreting than the conditions under which traditional translations might normally be produced. Additionally, more demands are made on the television news translator, since he or she has to be able to work across two languages, to be able to synthesize material very rapidly, to reshape material mindful of the target audience, to match the words to footage. In short, the television news translator has to demonstrate skills that are linguistic, cultural, technological, editorial and presentational. Tsai suggests that this complex combination raises questions about the definition of what translation is, but she also points out that she enjoyed a high degree of

freedom to rewrite, though 'under the one condition that the target texts should always be congruent with the source texts in meanings, nuances and facts' (Tsai, 2005: 149). Achieving such congruences, however, can pose difficulties, given the differences in language (a three-minute story in English could translate into less than one minute in Mandarin, for example), cultural differences and differences in audience expectations; for example, a story given a lot of air-time on the BBC World Service or CNN, might be of little interest to Taiwanese viewers. The television news translator has therefore to balance items of global relevance with local horizons of expectation, and in the Taiwanese case, this also involves an awareness of the ethical and political implications of Taiwan's often tense relationship with neighbouring China. Tsai's account of her experiences as a television news translator serves to reinforce O'Hagan and Ashworth's claim that the rapidly changing infrastructure of communication today is leading to a new paradigm of translation and interpretation, as the two once-distinct activities are drawn more closely together. Tsai's experiences also support the views of Daniel Gile, one of the leading figures in interpreting research, who has called for greater collaboration between researchers in interpreting and in translation, precisely because of the increasing links between these two previously separate fields through media translation (Gile, 2004).

GLOBAL NEWS TRANSLATION

Claire Tsai says that she did not describe herself as a translator, preferring to use another word that carried less negatively loaded baggage. The same attitude can be found in print journalism also, where the term 'international journalist' is deemed preferable to the term 'translator'. The news agency Reuters avoids the term 'translator' altogether, despite having a large international, multilingual staff. Anthony Williams, a senior Reuters journalist points out that a typical Reuters bureau will have international staff writing for an international audience, and local-language reporters writing for the local market, hence staff in both groups need to be linguists and to know how to shape material for their target audiences. But Williams does not define any of this

writing as translation; the international staff use material from all kinds of sources and structure it for their target group, and this process involves serious editorial intervention. International journalists may be given transcripts or recordings that need to be reduced radically; Williams notes that 'If you get 100,000 words in some language, you don't want 100,000 or 150,000 in English. You need someone who can understand it and give you the main points very fast' (Bielsa and Bassnett, 2009: 142). In such cases what is required is an ability to synthesize and then to select, with a designated readership in mind. Williams also does not recognize as translation the stories written up by local-language journalists, claiming that this work 'is not translation pure and simple, rather the production of a news service, a news product in a specific language, tailored to a specific local audience and reflecting the journalistic norms in that region' (Bielsa and Bassnett, 2009: 135).

Williams make a distinction between what he understands as international journalism and what he calls 'translation pure and simple'. But as this book has sought to show, there can be no such thing as 'translation pure and simple', since all interlingual textual transfer involves reading and rewriting within a dual context. His use of the term 'translation' suggests that he sees it as a word-for-word activity, without any creative dimension, and certainly not as the rewriting of an original text. This attitude towards the term is widespread, and means that when different professionals talk about translation, they have very different concepts in mind. This then has an impact on both the practice of translating and the way in which translators are trained. In our study of translation in global news, Esperanza Bielsa and I looked both at the history of the development of international news agencies and at cases of international reporting of the same contemporary story by different news agencies, and concluded that there is no consistency at all in translation practices, no shared notion of what translation entails and no agreed term for what happens when stories move (at ever increasing speed) around the planet, crossing possibly several language frontiers as they go.

We also examined another important dimension of news translation: the very different journalistic practices and rhetorical

traditions that have become conventionalized in different cultures. For example, the comic byline or headline, much used by the British tabloid press would be unacceptable in other cultures, just as the use of hyperbole and a florid style favoured by Italian or Arabic journalism would be unacceptable to English readers. Direct speech may be acceptable in some contexts, but not acceptable in others, while even narrative lines in reporting differ across cultures. Basil Hatim and Ian Mason have explored the problems of translating texts that present a particular line of argument, making a distinction between what they call 'through-argumentation' (that is, stating a proposition and then following it through), and 'counter-argumentation', which they describe as the setting out of a thesis to be contested and then proceeding to produce a counter-thesis (Hatim and Mason, 1997: 127). They use both English and Arabic examples, showing how there appears to be a strong tendency to the kind of 'either-or' balance produced by counter-argumentation in English, with the opposite being the case in the Arabic tradition. Both these conventions have, of course, different ideological implications, and the problem arises when a translator has to render a counter-argued article for a readership where the expectation is for a through-argued article or vice versa. In such cases the translator will have to make major changes to the structure of a narrative in order to comply with the dominant norms operating in the target language. As Norman Fairclough has also argued, the way in which news narratives are structured alters form and meaning according to the genre conventions operating in news reporting in particular contexts (Fairclough, 1995). Hatim and Mason argue also that once these changes start to happen, there are ideological implications, since a text type functions as a 'carrier of ideological meaning' (Hatim and Mason, 1997: 142). Through-argumentation and counter-argumentation require totally different reading strategies, and those strategies are culture-bound. This means that in any translation, texts have to be restructured in accordance with the target culture's norms, since a failure to do this will lead to the creation of radical shifts of emphasis. In an essay in *Third World Quarterly* entitled 'Translating Terror', I used the example of a piece in the *Guardian* newspaper purporting to be from an

Islamist website and translated by Reuters to show what can happen when a translator fails to rewrite a text in accordance with target cultural expectations and norms. The headline was an 'Al-Qaida statement: "The cars of death will not stop"' and the item referred to car bombs, one of which had just killed the British consul in Istanbul. What caught my attention was the curiously stilted phrase 'cars of death' instead of the normal 'car bombs', and an examination of the text showed a host of archaic, awkward phrases and structures ('O Bush', 'O Islamic nation') couched in apocalyptic language with Old Testament or Koranic overtones.

The Reuters translator had reproduced the rhetorical conventions in a particular variant of Arabic used by fundamentalist groups, so arguably the translation was an accurate rendering of the original. The problem, though, is that because there is no equivalent rhetorical convention in English, the English version read like an absurd caricature of an imagined fundamentalist terrorist. The translator may have aimed to reproduce the original for English-language readers, and indeed, even provided a gloss to some unfamiliar terms, but did not adjust the rhetoric to cater for a Western readership, hence the text reinforced the stereotype of the fundamentalist in direct conflict with an identified enemy but even more so, with modern life itself. As I argued, 'even car bombs are transformed into quaintly antiquated cars of death. Terror is transmogrified' (Bassnett, 2005b).

Extreme faithfulness in this case skews the reading of the translation, so that the threat the text contains cannot be taken seriously because the language appears so ridiculously exaggerated and outdated. Similarly, translations of the political speeches of figures such as Saddam Hussein, General Gaddafi or the Syrian President al-Assad often reproduced rhetorical conventions that are acceptable in the source culture, but which become absurd and comical when translated without making any adjustments necessary to accommodate target audience expectations. Retaining the foreign elements in these cases rather than opting for a domestication strategy in translation serves only to denigrate and distort the original message. It is tempting to speculate on

whether translations such as the 'cars of death' article are intended to have such an effect on readers, thus reinforcing cultural differences between West and East, which is not improbable given the general trend in news translation towards a domestication or a caricaturing of the foreign, where some non-Western political figures are regarded with contempt in the Western media.

Although there is an established body of research into news reporting in both print and other media, the interlingual dimension has received very little attention until recently, and this is surprising given the demand for international news and the existence of large international news agencies and media companies. Investigation into translation tends not to feature much in media studies, communication studies or in globalization studies, even when an obvious interlingual dimension is present. This could be explained in part by the fact that journalistic texts are produced for specific audiences, and attention has focused on examining their relationship with those audiences, through the analysis of class, gender, education, political affiliation and other significant factors, rather than on any consideration of what happens when information shifts across languages. In our research into global news translation, Bielsa and I wanted to examine those information shifts, in order to produce a clear understanding of what news translation involves. As we compared the reporting of what appeared to be the same story in several languages and in different media outlets, we discovered that the variations in information were sometimes so great that we could only loosely grasp what any 'original' story might have been. These variations are a result of the fact that the focus of news translation is not on linguistic transfer at all, as would certainly be the case in some other forms of translation, but is, rather, on the transmission of information designed to meet the needs of the target audience. The myriad sources of information utilized, along with the transformations a text undergoes as it is shaped for its final destination mean that it is often difficult to identify anything that can be termed an 'original text', with the result that in the absence of an original, news translators intervene in each case to rewrite a text for a new public. We looked at how even where there was an identifiable source, changes were made to the order of paragraphs, new information

was added and contextualized, paragraphs that were no longer considered relevant were simply cut out, and different news angles were privileged to cater for a local audience, all of which formed part of the ordinary operations of news translation (Bielsa and Bassnett, 2009).

What happens in news translation is that here too, the traditional idea of the translator as a single individual working alone with a source text can no longer be sustained. Instead, there are networks of foreign correspondents, some inside and some outside news agencies, writing stories for designated readers in accordance with the norms and expectations of particular target groups. The refusal of the term 'translator' by international journalists is explicable, given that they make a sharp distinction between the phase of direct interlingual transfer and the final production of a news item. It may well be, for example, that several hours of recording or tens of thousands of words of transcript are ultimately reduced to a few lines in the target language, or that sound-bites are cherry-picked from a large amount of material that is then discarded. What news translation highlights is the difficulty of determining what an original actually is, which in turn raises the question of how a translation can be defined once we move away from the concept of translation as the reshaping of a text that has a prior existence somewhere else. It also raises another very significant issue: the unequal political power relations that are reflected in unequal linguistic power relations.

The translation of political discourse presents similar problems to the translation of news, and here too in this relatively unexplored field there are difficult questions to be addressed. We know little about global news translation, but even less about the translation practices in political institutions and their interaction with the media. Christina Schaeffner is one of the leading experts in the field, and lists some of the crucial questions that remain unresolved:

> What exactly happens in the complex processes of recontextualization across linguistic, cultural and ideological boundaries? What exactly happens in the processes from producing political discourse within a particular national political institution to its (re)presentation in mass media in another language in another country? Who exactly are the

> agents who are involved in all these processes, and who takes which decisions and why at which point? How are all these complex processes reflected in the texts, which transformations occur in the recontextualization processes ... How can these transformations be explained and justified? What effect do they have on readers and their perception of politics?
>
> (Schaeffner and Bassnett, 2010: 21)

In her analysis of political speeches in translation between German and English, Schaeffner has as yet to draw firm conclusions, although she has shown the extent to which material for the media is selected and reshaped in translation to conform to audience expectations in terms of stylistic norms, and also to accommodate cultural stereotypes. In an essay on the German magazine, *Spiegel International*, she cites an article that reported an incident in 2005 when Prince Harry, then third in line to the British throne, attended a party wearing a Nazi uniform. The article was apparently based on British journalistic sources, which led to a broadening of the discussion to an examination of Britain's attitude to its own past. Schaeffner notes that news items about the British royal family are only rarely reported in *Der Spiegel*, but this incident opened up interesting questions about prevailing British attitudes towards Germany. She goes on to note how the British magazine, *The Economist* then picked up the story, criticizing *Der Spiegel* for claiming the moral high ground over Nazism. This example highlights the increasingly international intertextuality of news media, and how stories are rewritten to cater for target audience expectations. Schaeffner's work shows how the translation of political discourse, like the translation of news items more generally, is target-oriented, with the (usually anonymous) agent selecting particular items and then freely restructuring the source texts (Schaeffner, 2005).

GLOBAL AND LOCAL

Underlying the issues around translation in journalism and politics are ideological questions about the relationship between the global and the local, between what is deemed to be the centre and the periphery. Michael Cronin's book, *Translation and Globalization* (2003) is a study of the ways in which global social and economic changes are connected to the burgeoning translation industry. He provides examples of the ways in which that industry has grown into a multimillion pound empire, noting that the rapid establishment of a broadband infrastructure has led to the establishment of software technology parks in India and other South Asian countries, and hence to a reassessment of the relation between the centre and the margins:

> Peripherality is no longer geographically, but is now chronologically, defined. It is defined by the speed with which information-rich (financial products, online support, telemarketing of produced and consumer services) and design-rich (popular music, Web design, advertising) goods and services can be delivered to potential consumers.
>
> (Cronin, 2003: 83)

This means that a new set of global maps is emerging, with erstwhile 'Third World' countries such as India rapidly coming to occupy a significant position in the burgeoning network of international communications. Cronin examines the role of translation in the global economy, noting that, like most of the research on globalization, language and translation, although vital, translation is rarely mentioned in the Anglophone world. He also reminds us that in the rhetoric about universal communication there are unresolved questions of linguistic and cultural hegemony, and warns against glib assumptions about free markets and free-flowing information, reminding us that any discussion of translation and globalization must take into account the underlying political and economic realities. One issue that concerns him in particular, as a citizen of a small country and speaker of a minority language, Irish, is the relationship between minority cultures and dominant languages. The global power of European languages such as French, Portuguese and Spanish is evident, as is the growing significance of Mandarin, but most significant of all is the power of global English. Mary Snell-Hornby has condemned global English as a language that has lost track of its cultural identity and its hidden subtleties and that has become a 'reduced

standardized form of language for supra-cultural communication, the "Maclanguage" of our globalized "Macworld" or the "Euro-speak" of our multilingual continent' (Snell-Hornby, 2000: 11). But regardless of such contempt for what she sees as a reduced, standardized language, the fact remains that English is the world's most visible language, and its power is reinforced in visual media, in international economics and, most tellingly in the twenty-first century, in the so-called 'War on Terror'. Almost half of all translations worldwide are from English into other languages, with roughly one-third of Internet users being English speakers. Such dominance by one language has implications for other, less widely spoken languages; it also produces another kind of linguistic imbalance, as foreign language learning among native English speakers is in decline, a fact that has serious implications for the future. Not only is bilingualism in speakers of English and another language diminishing, but Cronin also expresses concern about another form of bilingualism, which he calls 'marked bilingualism'. This involves speakers of two minority languages that do not have equal power and prestige, and is particularly acute in states where there is just one national language. He gives as an example the case of Botswana, where Setswana is the national language but where there are also many local languages. Cronin warns that 'an undue fixation on the European languages of former colonists in discussions of globalization can obscure the more important local dynamics of different language situations' (Cronin, 2003: 166). In his rather troubling vision of language politics around the world, he argues for what he calls a 'translation ecology', for greater awareness of the disappearance of small languages and the need to resist the hegemony of the English language that, as Bourdieu and Wacquant have pointed out, universalizes the particulars of Anglo-American culture and politics (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2001). Offering a more hopeful prospect, Cronin argues that since translation has played a major role in the development and consolidation of national languages, so it might also be of benefit to minority languages provided those languages can exercise a degree of cultural control: 'Translation in a globalized world has the potential both to strengthen the localization of speech communities ... and to allow for the engagement with

others, without which we are condemned to, at best, mutual indifference and, at worst, reciprocal hostility' (Cronin, 2003: 168). Translation should be employed to highlight difference, he argues, rather than to seek to erase it, since it is only by a greater awareness of difference that human beings can hope to break the cycle of violence in which cultures around the world are locked. Cronin's position is that of a 'translation local' resisting the power of the transnational global forces that subjugate less powerful languages and cultures.

Establishing linguistic policies that cater for both global and local needs is a task fraught with difficulties. Writing about the development of language policy in the European Union, from its inception to the present, Ubaldo Stecconi shows how changes to the global political map can have repercussions linguistically. He shows how the EU has moved from the position of the early Council regulations, which identified four languages, defined as 'official and working': Dutch, French, German and Italian, to a broader linguistic spectrum as more states joined the EU. In 2004, the Reform Treaty agreed that there should be no language discrimination and established language as a field where policy changes must be decided by unanimous Council vote. However, Stecconi identifies three areas of potential difficulty regarding EU language policy, the first of which is greater European diversity due to the influx of migrants from outside Europe who bring their own customs and languages with them. In Italy, for example, this phenomenon has become so widespread that it has even led to a new word entering the language, '*extracommunitari*' ('those from outside the EU'). The second area concerns the wording of Article IV-448 of the 2004 Treaty which declares that:

> This Treaty may also be translated into any other languages, as determined by Member States among those which, in accordance with their constitutional order, enjoy official status in all or part of their territory.
>
> (Stecconi, 2010: 152)

This clause relates to the growing pressure in some countries for the recognition of regional languages rather than a single national

language. In Spain, for example, Catalan, Basque and Galician coexist with Castilian Spanish, while in the United Kingdom, Welsh and Gaelic coexist with English, although hardly on equal terms. The whole question of what constitutes a national as opposed to a regional language is complex and as highly charged ideologically as are the debates about whether a language can be distinguished from a dialect. The case of 'Scots' exemplifies this difficulty, since it is regarded as both a dialect of English, comparable to other dialects, and, by some as a separate language, with these opposing views generating a great deal of conflict. Such debates are by no means abstract, as the division in the 1990s, following the bitter conflict in the Balkans, of the language once known as Serbo-Croat into two distinct languages, Serbian and Croatian demonstrates.

Stecconi's third point concerns the 2005 EU proposal for a strategy on multilingualism, defined as a person's ability to use several languages. He points out that besides the 90 aboriginal languages spoken across Europe, a British survey of 2005 showed that as many as 273 different languages were being spoken by British schoolchildren. As he remarks in his conclusion, there is much more to language policy for the EU than translating legislation into the national languages of the member states.

AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION

As we observed in Chapter 1, societies are becoming more multilingual, while at the same time the technological revolution has brought about major changes in communication, both locally and internationally. The expansion of translation technology has led to changes in translator training programmes, and this has been accompanied by an expansion of research in such fields as machine translation, dubbing and subtitling, Internet translation, and translation and global markets. Each of these fields has its distinct methodologies and literatures, but what is noticeable is that research in these areas tends to draw upon communication studies, language engineering and applied linguistics rather than upon literary and cultural studies, and so occupies a position connected to, yet not entirely within, translation studies.

Audiovisual translation is a rapidly expanding interdisciplinary field in its own right, and just as film and media studies seceded from literary studies in the 1970s, so we are now witnessing a shift towards audiovisual translation becoming yet another field of research independent from what is generally accepted as translation studies, despite its concern with aspects of translation. Nevertheless, in audiovisual translation there are also significant ideological issues, one of which is the dominance of English in film and television production. That dominance is not only a result of the geographical location of audiovisual production centres in the United States and Britain, it is also, as Jorge Diaz-Cintas, one of the principal researchers into audiovisual translation, reminds us, a result of the way in which English is used in the industry. Films in minority languages tend to be translated first into English, then out of English, which serves only as a bridging language into other languages, 'with decisions taken in English-speaking cities rather than in the "territories" as they are called in the DVD industry jargon' (Diaz-Cintas, 2009: 10). He observes that the jargon used in the industry is reminiscent of a colonial past, with minority languages occupying a much lower status than the dominant language, English. The Catalan audiovisual expert, Anna Matamala, in an essay on the specific problems of audiovisual translation of documentaries, where factual accuracy is important, argues that many of these English bridging texts are of poor quality, having been done at high speed, and she offers the example of a documentary originally shot in French, translated roughly into English and then handed on to be translated for transmission in Catalan. The English translation contained wrong information and also French transcriptions of Arabic names, leaving Matamala to pose the important question of where the responsibility lies for the verification of the content of a translation into a third language (Matamala, 2009).

The growth of the film industry in the early twentieth century had, of course, major implications for translation and here too there is a large body of work on subtitling and dubbing in different cultures. What is of interest in this chapter is the question of why and how different industries should have developed in different places, which means that some cultures have a marked

preference for subtitling, while others favour dubbing. Of course, the difference between the two, is that in a subtitled programme the audience also has access to the original sound track, which means that two linguistic systems are in operation simultaneously, whereas in a dubbed programme, only one language can be heard. Whereas subtitling involves finding all kinds of textual and paratextual strategies to match the written text to what the characters are perceived to be saying, dubbing involves a whole other range of semiotic systems, including the matching linguistic registers and the timing and synchronizing of mouth movements. Dubbing in consequence is far more expensive than subtitling, since actors also have to be employed to reinforce the illusion of authenticity. Germany, Spain and Italy all have long-standing dubbing traditions, while English-speaking countries, the Netherlands and the Nordic countries favour subtitles. This may well have been linked originally to levels of illiteracy, which meant that sizeable portions of some audiences would not have been able to read subtitles, but it can hardly be accidental that Germany, Spain and Italy made the decision to set up costly dubbing industries during their years of dictatorship. Camino Gutierrez Lanza has examined the Spanish film industry and concludes that after the Civil War, dubbing became a prime means of censoring films judged to contain undesirable values:

> The obligatory dubbing of all foreign films, originally introduced to facilitate the understanding of the dialogue by Spanish viewers, became the main controlling instrument in the hands of the censors. Frequently, thanks to the manipulation of dialogue, which sometimes reached astonishing limits of mental deviousness ... and also to precise lip synchrony, viewers would little suspect that the films they watched had once been full of prohibited references.
>
> (Gutierrez Lanza, 2002: 147–8)

The invisibility of dubbing made it an ideal means of censoring foreign texts, while the visible presence of subtitling has had a positive impact by encouraging linguistic competence in countries where the majority of television programmes and films in general distribution are in English. However, this has not happened in the English-speaking world, since only a tiny minority of non-English materials find their way to English-language audiences, a further reflection of the relative absence of translations both in film and in print.

TRANSLATING WITHOUT LANGUAGES

Noting that there is no single generally accepted model of globalization in a context of multiple modernities, Michael Cronin suggests that rather than talking about globalization and translation, we should consider globalization *as* translation. Translation, he argues, is not a by-product of globalization, it is a constituent, integral part of the phenomenon (Cronin, 2003: 34). He is right, of course, but yet this self-evident fact is not generally recognized, particularly in the Anglophone world where there is still an uneasiness about acknowledging the importance of translation in intercultural exchange, and an uneasiness about translation generally, as can be seen by the terminological confusion surrounding the very word 'translation'. However, what has also happened in the English-speaking world is that while there may be a reluctance to engage with languages directly, there has been considerable interest in learning how to do business in other cultures without necessarily acquiring linguistic competence. Such has been the need for greater intercultural awareness that there are now extensive training programmes on offer along with hundreds, if not thousands of self-help manuals. The prefatorial statement in one of these manuals, *Kiss, Bow or Shake Hands*, subtitled *How to Do Business in Sixty Countries* sets out the authors' aims:

> Globalization, by definition, requires you to deal with, sell to, and/or buy from people in other countries. These people probably speak different languages, have different cultural attitudes, and have different historical backgrounds. They cannot be dealt with, sold to, or bought from in the same way as a domestic company ...
>
> To put it another way, you may know your particular industry inside and out, forward and backward, better than anyone else. Yet when you step off that plane in a foreign country, that expertise is not enough. If you do not have the knowledge of foreign business

> practices, negotiation techniques, cognitive styles, and social customs compiled here, the odds are that you will fail.
>
> (Morrison et al., 1994: viii)

The pioneers of what has come to be called intercultural awareness training are two Dutchmen, Geert Hofstede and Fons Trompenaars. Both have established models of cultural diversity in the business world, based on extensive field work and interviews. Hofstede initially published his findings in his *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values* (1980), while Trompenaars followed with his *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Diversity in Global Business* (1993), revised and reissued in a co-authored edition with Charles Hampden-Turner in 1997. Hofstede established four dimensions of culture, which he called 'Power Distance', 'Individualism', 'Masculinity' and 'Uncertainty Avoidance', while Trompenaars and Hampton-Turner then established seven dimensions of culture: universalism versus pluralism, individualism and communitarianism, specific versus diffuse, affectivity versus neutrality, inner directed versus outer directed, achieved status versus ascribed status, and sequential time versus synchronic time. These models are then used to train international business people how to deal with such issues as different concepts of status and authority, time-keeping, forward planning, person-management, individualism and so forth. Their concepts of culture are simplistic, but their impact on international business studies has been immense.

Edward T. Hall, the anthropologist generally credited with developing a theory of proxemics is also the author of several intercultural awareness manuals. His *Understanding Cultural Differences*, co-authored with Mildred Reed Hall focuses on German, French and American cultures, and is also based on extensive fieldwork. Hall is particularly interested in behaviours, announcing that what he calls 'cultural communications' are deeper and more complex than spoken or written messages. He means by this how people behave and he informs his readers that 'the essence of effective cross-cultural communication has more to do with releasing the right responses than with sending the "right" messages' (Hall and Hall, 1990: 4). What this kind of literature tries

to do is to equip anyone wanting to do business in other countries with a set of tools, with keys that are intended to unlock doors that without any level of linguistic competence would otherwise be firmly shut. The problem is that the books are generalized and oversimplified, based as they are on stereotypes and on notions of cultural hegemony that aim to reinforce and advance global capitalism. For example, Morrison et al. set out rules for behaviour in different countries that include such gems as 'Most Chinese will not make any important decisions without first consulting the stars', or 'The English usually enjoy talking about animals', or that 'The Dutch have several gestures to indicate that someone is deranged' (Morrison et al., 1994). Nevertheless it would be a mistake to dismiss this kind of work, because it is now so widespread and has acquired a role in international business and management studies, which means that it operates alongside translation.

THE FUTURE OF TRANSLATION

This brief survey of translation and globalization has sought to demonstrate the diversity of translation practices in various strands of twenty-first century international communication. Unquestionably the role of the translator is changing and the confusion around the terminology of translation reflects growing discomfort with the traditional concept of translation as interlingual transfer. Translation in some fields can be described as a hybrid, or a collaborative activity, and technological advances now demand different skills from translators, while audience expectations have also altered radically, changing the time frame within which translations have in the past been produced. Intercultural awareness programmes, devised to replace the acquisition of competence in another language also challenge perceptions of what translation is and does. What we now have is a world where translation is crucially important to the extent that, as Michael Cronin suggests, globalization could not happen without translation, yet where there is no clear understanding of what happens in translation and little sign of any re-evaluation of the role and status of translators.

7

BOUNDARIES OF TRANSLATION

WRESTLING WITH THE LITERAL

One of the most accessible recent books about translation is David Bellos' *Is that a Fish in Your Ear?* (2011) subtitled *Translation and the Meaning of Everything*. The reference in the title is to Douglas Adams' Babel fish, which the space travellers of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* used to facilitate communication in every language in the universe. One Babel fish in someone's ear, and all languages became intelligible and thus the curse of Babel could be laid to rest once and for all. It is an absurd idea, obviously, yet it serves to highlight the problem facing any voyager anywhere, on this planet or across the galaxy, of how to communicate without a common language. In the last of his 32 short pieces offering different perspectives on the question of what it is that translation does, Bellos' conclusion is that translation, even more than speech itself, 'provides incontrovertible evidence of the human capacity to think and to communicate thought' (Bellos, 2011: 353).

Before arriving at that conclusion, he not only highlights, often very wittily, the complexities of translation, but debunks several

myths about translation in the process. One myth that he tackles is that there can actually be something called 'literal translation'. He goes back to St Jerome's famous Letter to Pammachius and looks again at the source of the 'word-for-word' and 'sense-for-sense' dichotomy that has underpinned nearly 2,000 years of thinking about translation. Bellos focuses on Jerome's phrase '*ubi et verborum ordo mysterium est*', which he renders as 'in those places where the order of the words is also a *mysterium*', noting that there is doubt as to what that final Latin word *mysterium* means. What Jerome could be saying, therefore, is that there are times when he abandons both word-for-word *and* sense-for-sense translation, in places where he is not quite sure about the precise meaning of the original. This, says Bellos, is what translators have always done: where the meaning is obscure, they 'offer a representation of the separate words of the original', since unlike other readers they cannot skip obscure sentences and simply carry on reading regardless (Bellos, 2011: 108). This leads him to question the very idea of a literal translation, and to conclude that if a literal, or word-for-word translation does not make sense to the target audience, then it is not a translation at all because it will be unable to transmit meaning. St Jerome seems to have grasped this point, hence his use of the term *mysterium*, or that which no translator can resolve. Faced with the inexplicable, the translator has to make an informed guess.

It has always been obvious that not everything is translatable. The translation of idioms, proverbs, puns and other forms of wordplay are a good test of the untranslatable: for example, the English phrases 'fit as a fiddle' or 'laughing like a drain' would be meaningless in any other language if translated literally. Jokes are also notoriously difficult to translate, as the Italian linguist Delia Chiaro has shown. Referring to the problems of translating humour into and out of a specifically British context, Chiaro draws attention to the combination of verbal play and context, noting that:

> Despite the fact that English has now become an international language, its expressions of humour remain a mystery to all but its most proficient speakers. What is more, in British society, verbal play tends

> to be ubiquitous. It seems to be acceptable to play with words in a myriad of situations in which it would be considered out of place in many other cultures. Thus a foreigner could be confused by the occurrence of a joke or else find that his attempt at punning is met with disapproval not only because he has chosen the wrong moment or place to play with words, but above all because his audience is unwilling to accept him as part of their 'group'.
>
> (Chiaro, 1992: 122)

In such cases, a **functionalist** approach to translation is the only viable option: the translator has to create a text that will render for target readers the objective or purpose of the source text. This is the case with jokes, and also with other text types. For example, an instruction manual needs to be translated in such a way that the advice given is clearly stated and in terms that comply with target culture expectations; legal correspondence must be shaped in accordance with the prevailing norms of legal texts in the target language. But for jokes to work, they have to be reformulated (in those cases where reformulation is possible), and news items have to be written with the express intention to communicate with the target group for whom the news is intended. In short, the translator has to put the requirements of the designated audience before any abstract theories of faithfulness and aim to be faithful only to reproducing whatever the function of the original text might have been. This means that the translator has the freedom to rewrite that original without incurring allegations of unfaithfulness. What is interesting is that such freedom should be widely accepted in the translation practice of most text types, but that it is continually disputed when it comes to thinking about the amount of freedom a literary translator may exercise.

It was noted earlier that all translation theory revolves around the problem of determining the freedom of the translator, with the two polarized positions of 'translator as slave to the original' and 'translator as creator of a new original' on opposite sides. This polarization has become more acute since the advent of printing and copyright laws, which introduced a new dimension to the

ownership of texts that Geoffrey Chaucer or Dante would never have dreamed of. It has also intensified with the development of bilingual dictionaries and the assumption that translation is simply a matter of finding the right verbal equivalents in one language for a piece of writing produced in another language. That idea has been enshrined in pedagogical practice, wherein anyone learning another language is expected to produce 'faithful' translations that are not evaluated in terms of their aesthetic quality or stylistic excellence, but in terms of how well they demonstrate an understanding of the source text, regardless of any stylistic distortions in the target text that may occur. In his essay, 'Facing up to the Muses', Tony Harrison tells how, as a boy, he tried to introduce colloquial language into a school Latin translation:

> I think it was a piece of a Plautus play, and there was some official or other moving a group of people along a crowded street. My translation went something like: 'Move along there!' true to constabulary vernacular. I do remember that this was crossed out with a heavy red pen and the alternative I was offered in the margin by the teacher was: 'Vacate the thoroughfare!'
>
> (Harrison, 1991a: 438)

In the same piece, Harrison quotes one of his own poems that focuses on how badly he was taught to translate at school. Here Harrison is talking about what Jakobson defined as two kinds of translation, the interlingual, which takes place across languages and the intralingual, which takes place within the same language. The working-class schoolboy from the north of England who spoke a dialect form of English was forced to use Standard English when translating from Latin, as his own regional variant was not considered acceptable

> We boys can take old Hansards and translate
> the British Empire into SPQR
> but nothing demotic or too up to date,
> and *not* the English that I speak at home,

> not Hansard standards, and if Antoninus
> spoke like delinquent Latin back in Rome
> he'd probably get gamma double minus.
>
> (Harrison, 1991a: 438)

The objective of translation as a pedagogical tool has been to demonstrate sound knowledge of the source language, its vocabulary and structures and nothing more than that. From such practice came the idea of the faithful translation, that should reproduce in every detail the structures, grammar, syntax and vocabulary of the original, and though this was plainly absurd to anyone attempting to translate, the myth of perfect fidelity persisted and in discussions about literary translation, still continues.

CAN EVERYTHING BE TRANSLATED?

Although translators have often paid lip service to fidelity to the source text, many have proceeded to ignore any idea of sameness, and have adapted texts in their own way, as was the case with Dante Gabriel Rossetti who produced some fine translations of medieval Italian lyric poetry yet claimed in the introduction to his work that he was subservient to the original authors and had no free will of his own to exercise any creativity. Rossetti compared the translator to Aladdin wandering through the cave in search of the magic lamp:

> Many are the precious fruits and flowers which he must pass by unheeded in search for the lamp alone; happy if at last, when brought to light, it does not prove that his old lamp has been exchanged for a new one-glittering indeed to the eye, but scarcely of the same virtue nor with the same genius at its summons.
>
> (Rossetti, 1968: 176)

Having said this, Rossetti ignored his own advice and produced good translations as a consequence. Moreover, he very carefully selected the poems he translated, excluding anything he judged incompatible with the ideals of the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, that is, anything he deemed to be too overtly intellectual.

Rossetti's translations of early Italian poetry are a good example of how the selection and editing of source material by a translator with a particular agenda in mind can affect the ways in which a whole generation of poets is viewed in the target culture.

The gap between what some translators claim to be doing and what they then go on to do in practice can be very wide indeed. Professing faithfulness seems often to have been a ruse to silence accusations of unfaithfulness; not all translators were as bold as Ezra Pound who openly acknowledged that no translator of poetry could possibly remain faithful to the original: 'Taint what a man sez (*sic*) but what he *means* that the traducer (*sic*) has got to bring over. The *implication* of the word' (Pound, 2006 [1935]: 281). Note here Pound's witty use of the word 'traducer' rather than translator, which says a great deal about his response to the accusation of unfaithfulness to which he was himself periodically subjected. Pound was dismissive of the idea that a translator could faithfully reproduce an original, and all too aware of the kind of textual manipulations a good translator has to perform. In one of his most famous statements on translation, he set out his theory of what can and cannot be translated in poetry. He identifies three kinds of poetry: *melopoeia*, which refers to the musical property of words that can then affect meaning; *phanopoeia*, 'a casting of images upon the visual imagination'; and *logopoeia*, the most difficult of all to define, but which he explains as the use of words not only for their direct meaning but for all other layers of meaning. This third category accords with that part of the definition of the 'literariness' of literature, what the Russian Formalists termed *ostranenie*, or 'making strange', that is, a deliberate defamiliarizing of language so as to heighten a reader's perception of the words used by a poet. These three components of poetry, which may or may not be present at the same time in a poem, raise different degrees of difficulty for the translator. Pound claims that only *phanopoeia* can be translated comfortably (he was, of course, a founder of the Imagist movement, hence his unsurprising insistence on the significance of imagery in poetry), while *melopoeia* is almost impossible to translate because not all foreigners will be able to distinguish its characteristics. Any successful translation of the musical properties of words will only happen,

he argues, 'by divine accident, and for half a line at a time'. The most untranslatable of all three is *logopoeia*, and here Pound says that the translator has to paraphrase or try to find a way of determining the original author's state of mind in order to locate what he refers to as 'a derivative or an equivalent' (Pound, 1971 [1929]: 25). Of course since nobody can ever establish what an original author's intention might have been, the translator has to make a guess and then endeavour to construct something he/she feels is an adequate approximation.

As we have seen earlier in this book, generations of translators have pointed out that they refashion the original text in a new way. The problem around negative attitudes towards translation lies not with translators, but with commentators and critics who fail to understand that no text can be exactly reproduced in another language. The entire discourse of translation as the betrayal of an original is nothing less than an absurd value judgement, based on an idealization of what is achievable by a translator and on an outmoded hierarchical positioning of textual practice that relegates translation to a subsidiary marginal status. Today, at last, there are signs that this attitude is starting to shift, prompted not only by the increasingly articulate statements by translators themselves, and by the bringing to light of equally articulate comments by earlier translators that had been forgotten or ignored, but also by more sophisticated thinking about the relationship between writer and reader and by dialogue between theorists and practitioners of translation.

In his thoughtful book on translation and poetry, Matthew Reynolds wrestles with definitions and argues that since literary texts are indeterminate, in that they are only realized in readings, a translation can only provide 'a loose approximation to a source text which is already entrammelled in loose approximations in its own language' (Reynolds, 2011: 27). Translations will then be subject to the same loose approximations in the target culture, so since there can be no definitive reading there can obviously be no definitive translation. To this extent we are back with Borges and to the idea that the definitive text belongs only to religion or to fatigue. What Reynolds does is to propose a postmodernist vision of literary translation that stresses indeterminacy, and here he is in good company, along with Umberto Eco, Octavio Paz and Haroldo de Campos, to name but three, all of whom, as we have seen, conceive of translation as interpretation and hence as the rewriting *and* creation of a new 'original' in another language. Recognizing the indeterminacy of literary texts on the one hand, and the impossibility of 'faithful' translation on the other, liberates the translator from servitude to the source from which the translation derives and undermines the old Romantic concept of authorship and at the same time revises simplistic notions of intentionality.

COLLABORATIVE TRANSLATION

Reynolds argues that all translation can only provide a loose approximation of an original, and this can be seen at its clearest when it comes to the translation of theatre texts. It has often been pointed out that less has been written about translating for the theatre than about any other form of translation. In 1992, Lefevere commented on the fallacy of treating playtexts as just another literary form, and questioned the absence of theoretical literature on the translation of playtexts for performance (Lefevere, 1992a). Since then more work on translation and performance has started to appear, through the efforts of translator/scholars such as Sirkku Aaltonen, David Johnston and Cristina Marinetti, but this remains a relatively undiscussed field, probably because, as we shall see, translating for the theatre involves more than just one translator sitting at a desk.

A playtext is different from a poem or a novel because it exists in an irreducibly dialectical relationship with its performance. Debates have raged about definitions of that relationship, given that if there is a written text at all, then it is only one element in what constitutes theatre. The Polish theatre semiotician, Tadeusz Kowzan sketched out five semiotic systems that may contribute to the making of a performance: the verbal, for which there may or may not be a written version; bodily expression; the external appearance of actors including gesture; the playing space; and non-spoken sound (Kowzan, 1975). He breaks down these five categories into 13 subsystems, and although this model is somewhat instrumentalist, it nevertheless serves as a useful means of

understanding the complexity of sign systems in theatre, where the written text is only one component. Defining the relationship between that written text and its performance has led to the former being compared to a musical score, or seen as a kind of blueprint for performance, as somehow incomplete until it is performed, and as a text that somehow carries within it a system of gestic patterning that performers and directors can then decode as part of the process of actual performance. The term 'performability', loosely understood as that which can be realized in performance, has sometimes led to speculation that signs of performability may somehow be encoded in the written text. According to this argument, signs of performability are claimed to be implicit in a playtext, then actors and directors have the task of decoding that sign system. This has all kinds of implications, not the least of which is the plainly absurd presumption that gestic patterning or performability, if it exists, remains unchanged over time. The way in which Ancient Greek theatre was realized in performance is entirely inimical to twenty-first century conceptions of theatre, because norms and expectations of performance change just as rapidly as cultural and aesthetic norms change in other art forms. The kind of theatre appreciated by Victorian audiences, although much closer in time, would also be regarded as risible by today's audiences accustomed to completely different performance conventions.

Given that there is little clarity about the relationship between the written text and performance, the position of the theatre translator is intriguing. If there is such a thing as a system of latent signs of performability encoded in a playtext, how can any translator be expected to (a) decode them and (b) reproduce them in another language? The written text to be translated may exist as a formally constructed play, as a libretto, or as a rough sketch to be developed by actors as was the case with *commedia dell'arte* scenarios. So the problem for theatre translators is that, in addition to the linguistic and cultural issues posed by all translation, there is the added difficulty of the relationship of the text to be translated with the source and target theatre systems. As David Johnston suggests, theatre translation is a mobile practice in which nothing can be fixed, because not only are languages and cultures different, but so also are theatre systems, including conventions of performance and

audience expectations. Johnston's solution is to identify the task of the theatre translator as one of promoting hybridity, that is, as creating a hybrid text 'that will simultaneously move between and across different histories and geographies, locating and uprooting the historical and cultural imagination of the spectator in ways that seek to overcome the twin separations implied by aloofness and subjection' (Johnston, 2011: 19).

For Johnston, the translator has to be not only a reader and a rewriter, but also a spectator; in other words, he/she is a point through which different dimensions of the text, both written and performative, can flow. He uses the image of the translation as a prism that releases 'a series of intercultural and intertemporal moments that challenge and enrich spectator reception and experience' (Johnston, 2011: 19). The French theatre translator Jean-Michel Deprats views the translator as the first interpreter of a work, 'more in a musical than in an hermeneutic sense', though not as a director or as a critic (Deprats in Hoenslaars, 2004: 143). Both are, in different ways, wrestling with the incompleteness of the playtext while recognizing that their role is different from that of the performers who will bring that text to the public gaze.

When we consider translation for the theatre what becomes clear is that it is a collaborative activity, unlike other forms of translation. The director Peter Hall persuaded Tony Harrison to translate the *Oresteia* for the English National Theatre, and for some ten years, through the 1970s, the two men corresponded. In a letter of 22 December 1975, Harrison writes about being 'stuck', 'still waiting for take-off', although says that he is, at least, clear about what he should not do. He writes that he has been plodding through editions of the original text, commentaries and as many other translations as he could find, none of which are helping him to find the way in, and in asking Hall questions he notes that 'Every step, you see, is a committee decision' (Harrison, 1991b: 275). Harrison as translator can bring all his knowledge of Ancient Greek theatre into his work, but he still needs the help of a theatre practitioner to find the right rhythms for his translation.

The success of the Quebecois playwright Michel Tremblay, in Scotland is the result of another kind of collaboration, between the Canadian translator, Martin Bowman, and the Scottish writer,

Bill Findlay. They describe their work as a transatlantic collaboration and have written detailed accounts of how they worked together. Tremblay writes in *joual*, or Quebecois French, which Bowman and Findlay realized had affinities with Scots, since both vernaculars occupy a similar ideological relationship to Standard French and Standard English. Bowman and Findlay devised a working method that involved several stages of movement between languages, beginning from a literal ungrammatical English version of the original, to an exchange of questions and explanations of irony, wordplay and contextual references, and thence to several drafts in Scots before finally moving to rehearsal stage at which more changes were made (Findlay, 2004: 66).

The collaboration between the Canadian and Scottish writers enabled the cultural, linguistic and political parallels between Scotland and Quebec to be made explicit. In fact, what Bowman and Findlay did was to domesticate Tremblay, to reconfigure his work in a Scottish context, a process that Sirkku Aaltonen has described as acculturation, an important feature of theatre translation as a playtext is remodelled for domestic consumption (Aaltonen, 1996). It is interesting to note that whereas much ink has been spilt attacking translators of poetry for their 'unfaithfulness' to the original, the rewriting of playtexts to suit the needs of the target audience appears to be acceptable. Indeed, in some cases the work of foreign playwrights has been domesticated to the point where they have acquired a particular status in the target cultural canon.

Kenneth Tynan, the English theatre critic, commented on the acculturation of Anton Chekhov in the English theatre tradition, noting that the Russian playwright has been completely rewritten in an English context, to the extent that his works have come to acquire a whole new set of meanings that were never part of Chekhov's worldview. Discussing a production of *The Cherry Orchard*, Tynan remarks that:

> Our *Cherry Orchard* is a pathetic symphony, to be played in a mood of elegy. We invest it with a nostalgia for the past which, though it runs right through our culture, is alien to Chekhov's. His people are country gentry; we make them into decadent aristocrats.

> Next, we romanticize them. Their silliness becomes pitiable grotesquerie; and at this point our hearts warm to them. They are not Russians at all: they belong in the great line of English eccentrics. The upstart Lopakhin who buys up their heritage, cannot be other than a barbarous bounder. Having foisted on Chekhov a collection of patrician mental cases, we then congratulate him on having achieved honorary English citizenship.
>
> (Tynan, 1956: 273)

What Tynan could see were the shifts of meaning that had come about through translation. The acculturation of Chekhov's plays by generations of translators, directors and performers has led to the creation of a specifically English Chekhov, a playwright whose work has acquired a new set of signifiers in a changed cultural, political and theatrical context. Interestingly, Chekhov, like other great playwrights who never wrote in English – such as Ibsen, Strindberg, Pirandello or Brecht – is studied and performed as though he had been an English writer in the first instance. Chekhov's work has been refashioned in ways he could never have imagined.

A SPIRIT OF APPROPRIATION

In his introduction to a collection of essays on Greece and Rome in contemporary poetry in English entitled *Living Classics* (2009), Stephen Harrison argues that the age of subservience to ancient masters is over, because knowledge of Ancient Greek and Latin has all but disappeared, and that the classics can no longer be read unmediated because our contemporary poets approach these texts in a spirit of appropriation rather than in one of deference. This connects to what he sees as a key idea in modern reception studies: that 'the meaning of a work of literature is realized at least partly at the point of reception' (Harrison, 2009: 15). This is precisely what Itamar Even-Zohar had attempted to establish when he and other early translation studies pioneers endeavoured to shift the focus of the study of translation from the source to the target text and its context. For the success or failure of a translation is determined by how that translation is received, and the

reception is not necessarily connected to the position occupied by a text in its original context. This is the case with Chekhov's work in English, and there are many other examples of the vagaries of translation reception, one notable instance being the case of Jack London in Russian. Since first being translated at the height of his popularity in the English-speaking world, where he was more admired for bestsellers such as *The Call of the Wild* (1903), *White Fang* (1906) and *Martin Eden* (1909) than for *How I Became a Socialist* (1903), *The War of the Classes* (1905) or *The Iron Heel* (1908), there have been more than 90 million copies of his novels sold in the 33 languages of the former Soviet Union. So important was London deemed to be, that he is still considered a canonical figure in Russia and in former Soviet bloc countries, and since for a time Chinese scholars used Russian textbooks for the study of Western writers, London also became a canonical figure in China. Russian students today are far more likely to know Jack London's work than either their English or American counterparts, just as they are also far more likely to have studied Byron at school, along with Robert Burns, two other canonical figures in the Russian literary system.

Harrison's point about contemporary writers approaching earlier writers in a spirit of appropriation is important, because it suggests that there are signs of a changing attitude towards translation that is taking literary translators closer to the approaches favoured by non-literary translators, wherein the end justifies the strategies adopted, irrespective of the extent to which the original is reshaped and reformulated in the process. It is not too far-fetched to suggest that there is a sea-change taking place at the present time, as the lines that used once to be drawn between 'original' writing and translation have become so blurred that they can no longer be distinguished, as was indeed the case in Chaucer's time. Walter Benjamin used the image of translation as a piecing together of fragments, while Derek Walcott writes about the shards of ancient civilizations that enable an exploration of the archaeology of culture and which can then be formed into new patterns The image of piecing together shards of other civilizations suggests that translation is a dynamic creative process, rather than a pedantic endeavour designed merely to reproduce

something that has already disappeared from view, or has been destroyed.

The Irish poet, Michael Longley, has described himself as 'Homer-haunted for fifty years' (Longley, 2009: 97). In an autobiographical essay, 'Lapsed Classicist', he describes the gradual manner in which the classical writers he had studied began to emerge in his own poetry, and how the lines between translation and not-translation become more and more blurred. Longley states simply that translating Homer enabled him to write belated lamentations for his own parents, while Homer also empowered him to comment through poetry on the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Like Heaney, Longley uses the language of his community, transpositioning Homer's characters into Northern Ireland:

> Homer's language is an amalgam of dialects, I reassured myself. There are three registers in the poem. Telemachus is the Ulster-Scots narrator, Phemios and Medon sound orotund and theatrical (I kept Michael Mac Liammoir's fruity delivery in my head) and Odysseus speaks like an educated (but far from deracinated) Ulsterman.
>
> (Longley, 2009: 102–3)

One of Longley's most famous poems is a sonnet, 'Ceasefire' that was published in *The Irish Times* in 1994 immediately after the IRA had declared a ceasefire from midnight on 31 August of that year. The poem was widely praised and remains an extraordinarily powerful piece of writing. Longley explains that he had been rereading Book 24 of *The Iliad*, which relates how old King Priam went to the Greek camp to plead with Achilles to return the body of his son, Hector, whom Achilles had killed. The old man reminds Achilles of his own father, and a bond is forged between the two enemies. Longley explains how he compressed 200 lines into a short lyric and altered the sequence of events in Homer, so that instead of Priam kissing Achilles' hand when they meet, 'I put this at the end of my poem and inadvertently created a rhyming couplet. Three quatrains followed' (Longley, 2009: 104). It is the force of that final couplet, spoken by the old king, that creates the shock effect that makes the poem so powerful:

> 'I get down on my knees and do what must be done
> And kiss Achilles' hand, the killer of my son.'
>
> (Longley, 2006: 39)

It is clear that this poem, like a great deal of Longley's poetry, derives from Homer. The question is whether it can be defined as a translation, given the extent of the differences between the two texts. Certainly it would not be acceptable in a language classroom, yet Longley's poem would not exist without the Homeric original, and Longley himself insists that translation has been fundamental to his own imaginative development, stating: 'Versions that reflect my preoccupations at a deep level feel to me like my own poems, especially when, as is usually the case, I combine free rendition of source texts with original lines' (Longley, 2009: 110). What Longley does is to rewrite Greek and Latin authors as an integral part of his own poetic universe, not denying their presence but revitalizing them, bringing the dead back to life in another language and at another time and, since there is so little clarity about the precise nature of the ancient 'originals', his writing then becomes an exemplification of piecing together fragments to make a new vessel. Josephine Balmer states matter-of-factly that translators of ancient texts are de facto original writers because of the lack of clarity in the matter of what the sources are:

> With classical works, not only have the textual intentions of their original authors been lost, but also most of the texts themselves. Far from uncovering the 'world-view' of many of the poets translated here, debate centres on where or when in the world, even if, they might have lived-with estimates sometimes varying by centuries.
>
> (Balmer, 1996: 18)

Balmer uses terms such as 'recontextualization', 'juxtaposition' and 'transgression' to talk about her own writing practice which, like Longley, broadens traditional notions of translation. Her collection, *Chasing Catullus: Poems, Translations and Transgressions* was published in 2004, along with a companion volume, *Catullus: Poems of Love and Hate*, in the same year by the same

publisher, Bloodaxe. Balmer explains her transgressive activity as a process whereby she sometimes elongates or stretches an original text, or changes prose into poetry, or juxtaposes one of her own very personal poems with a translation, or adds a new title or a subtitle to alter the way in which a classical poem is read. In her collection, *The Word for Sorrow*, she juxtaposes translations from Ovid's *Tristia* with poems based on the personal experiences of a soldier posted to Gallipoli in 1915, inspired by her discovery of the soldier's name on the flyleaf of the Latin dictionary she was using, and by reflections on the coincidence of the journey to the Dardanelles undertaken by the exiled Roman poet and that of the young English soldier during the First World War. In her Catullus introduction, Balmer (2004a) reasserts her belief in the importance of what she terms the interplay between translation and original, which establishes links between past and present.

Translators sometimes use different terms to articulate some of the processes that Balmer describes. For example, the American poet Peter Stambler uses the term 'encounters' to explain his translation practice. In his introduction to his *Encounters with Cold Mountain*, a collection of translations of poems by the Chinese poet, Han Shan, Stambler explains what he set out to accomplish:

> The poems I've made are not translations in the literal or scholarly sense. They are, rather, *encounters*, perhaps conversations between a Tang Dynasty master and a twentieth century American poet. Writing on the balcony of my mountainside flat in Hong Kong, I have tried to understand Han Shan's mind and moods and poems; I have tried to preserve the essential quality of his life as a sentient man, and I have tried to make modern poems which will please readers and may have pleased him in our evening's conversations.
>
> (Stambler, 1996: n.p.)

Stambler's collection is a parallel edition, with the Chinese text at the top of each page, followed by the English text beneath in an attempt to enable bilingual readers to engage directly with the encounter that is taking place between the two poets. Like Longley and Balmer, Stambler appropriates the originals, using Han Shan's poems as a starting point for his own poems, but by

publicly acknowledging the Chinese source, and by insisting that what is happening is a cross-cultural encounter, he too invites reflection on traditional assumptions about translation.

TRANSLATING ONESELF

Those assumptions are also challenged by another area of interest in transnational literary studies. This is the growing phenomenon of self-translation, where writers work in more than one language and translate their own work. Rainier Grutman argues that self-translation has only recently started to be documented because of its increasing visibility, even though it is neither exceptional nor particularly modern. He sketches out three categories of self-translators: firstly, writers belonging to linguistic minorities, who aim for a wider readership in a more widely known language; secondly, colonial and postcolonial writers who are effectively bilingual (though as already noted in the case of Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Rabindranath Tagore, there is an unequal power hierarchy between the local and the colonial language); and thirdly, immigrant writers, such as Nabokov, who reinvent themselves in the language of their adoptive country (Grutman, 2013). One of the most frequently cited cases of self-translation is that of Samuel Beckett, who produced works in both French and English. His *Waiting for Godot* first appeared in French, then in English, while his novel, *Murphy*, was first published in English, then in French. A contemporary example of a writer who moves between languages is Nancy Huston, the Canadian author who writes versions of her novels in her first language, English and also in French. Indeed, it is so difficult in her case to define what constitutes an 'original' as opposed to a 'translation', that when her *Cantique des plains* won a major award for Canadian French language fiction, there were protests because it was held by some to be not an original at all, but rather a translation of her novel, *Plainsong*. Huston rejects what she perceives as a facile distinction between an original and a translation, arguing that she creates two versions of a text in two languages, each with its own set of significations. In an attempt to explain her interlinguistic creative process, she compares the self-translator struggling to exist in two

distinct languages with a child caught up in her parents' divorce, running back and forth between father and mother:

> trying to explain mummy to daddy and daddy to mummy, listen you guys, it may not sound like it but in fact you're saying exactly the same thing, listen listen, you're compatible, stay together, don't break up, don't fly apart, don't destroy us all by destroying your marriage, ... why such a deep rift between anglophones and francophones, the important things are the same in all our lives, aren't they?
>
> (Huston, personal communication 2011)

Understanding what happens in self-translation is complex, since on the one hand, there are two different sets of readers engaging with two versions of a text produced by just one writer, and on the other, there are factors linked to an individual writer's own creativity, which may develop differently as he or she moves between languages. In the introduction to a collection of essays on self-translation, Anthony Cordingley suggests that the self-translator is a kind of language broker, who acts as intermediary on behalf of an 'original text' but also for his or her own self (Cordingley, 2013: 1). What self-translation seems to offer is an opportunity for some writers to rethink and then rewrite, shifting between languages, so that both texts are original, albeit in different ways. Borges saw this kind of linguistic shape-shifting as part of a creative process that draws upon a variety of sources, declaring that he was always rewriting, repeating himself, even going so far as to accuse himself ironically of plagiarism:

> I have read so much and I have heard so much. I admit it: I repeat myself. I confirm it: I plagiarize. We are all the heirs of millions of scribes who have already written down all that is essential a long time before us. We are all copyists ... there are no longer any original ideas.
>
> (Borges in Kristal, 2002: 135)

WHEN A TRANSLATION IS NOT A TRANSLATION

When André Lefevere proposed that translations should be termed 'rewritings' he was proposing a move away from the constraints

imposed by traditional ideas of translation as a second-rate literary activity and affirming the creativity of the translator. When we came to write our book, *Constructing Cultures* (1996), Lefevere and I reflected on the very different questions that were being posed about translation in the 1990s, compared to the questions being posed in the 1970s, and we argued that translation studies had broadened out to the extent that it had come to be concerned with 'anything that (claims) to have anything to do with translation' (Bassnett and Lefevere, 1996: 1). Today an already widening field has broadened even further, and the epistemological questions generated around the topic of translation have, if anything, become even more urgent. How, today, can we define translation satisfactorily, given that the distinction between 'original' and 'translation' cannot be clearly determined for either literary or non-literary texts? Michael Longley's 'Ceasefire' is not a translation in the sense that it offers a line-by-line rendering of the Ancient Greek, but it is most certainly a translation in that it is based on a close reading of Homer, in that it moves readers to reflect on the horror and pity of war using the scenario created by the composer of *The Iliad* and it offers Homer an afterlife, to use Benjamin's image, of resurrection, in another time and place. Similarly, David Malouf's novel, *Ransom*, based also on Book 24 of *The Iliad* is another kind of translation, written in a time of international uncertainty in the age of the global War on Terror, but very recognizably indebted to Homer's poem. In his afterword, Malouf writes about how, as a small boy in Brisbane in 1943, when that city was the headquarters of the American Pacific campaign, he first heard about the Trojan War at school and immediately connected the ancient war of the story with the war in his own time. Thirty years later, in a time of another war, in Vietnam, Malouf wrote 'Episode from an Early War', a poem in which he tried to bring his experiences of real and fictitious war together. Another 30 years on, *Ransom*, published in 2009, and in an age of yet more wars, 're-enters the world of *The Iliad* to recount the story of Achilles, Patroclus, and Hector, and, in a very different version from the original, Priam's journey to the Greek camp' (Malouf, 2009: 223). But although his is a version of Homer, Malouf also says that the primary interest of the novel is in storytelling itself:

'why stories are told and why we need to hear them, how stories get changed in the telling – and much of what it has to tell are "untold tales" found only in the margins of earlier writers' (Malouf, 2009: 223). Stories are always changed in their retelling, just as translations always change the original text upon which they are based. There can never be sameness in translation, for as a text moves across languages, so it is decoded and re-encoded, dismembered and re-membered, reshaped and remade into a new original to be read anew.

Octavio Paz regards all literature as being part of a vast system, where every text is somehow connected to every other text, 'translations of translations of translations' (Paz, 1992 [1971]: 152). Each text is unique, yet no text can claim to be completely original 'because language itself, in its very essence, is already a translation – first from the nonverbal world, and then, because each sign and each phrase is a translation of another sign, another phrase' (Paz, 1992 [1971]: 154.)

This is another way of looking at translation, calling into question the very idea of originality, and this is what we can see happening in the theatre, in news translation and the translation of other media forms, in self-translation, and in the new spirit of appropriation with which contemporary writers are approaching canonical texts. In *Constructing Cultures*, Lefevere and I articulated our growing sense of discomfort with the term 'translation', arguing that too much emphasis had been placed on binary oppositions in models of translation and on trying to define the relationship between translation and original. We identified a number of cases of writing that cannot easily be labelled as either original or translation. Self-translation is one obvious example, as is pseudotranslation, to use the term popularized by Gideon Toury (1985) to describe what happens when a writer claims that a text is a translation of an original that does not exist. This can be a literary device used to create an impression of authenticity, or it can be a deliberate attempt to deceive readers. It can also be a way of producing a text that would not otherwise have been publishable. One of the most bizarre examples of the latter, is the 'translation' by Richard Burton of *The Kasidah of Haji Abdu El-Yezdi*, published in 1880, with 40 pages of fictitious notes on the

poem. The translator, who used the initials F.B. rather than his own name (Richard Francis Burton) also informed his readers that he had done considerable editorial work on the original Arabic poem. Burton went to great lengths to produce this elaborate literary hoax, yet in the same year he also published another translation, this time under his own name, of the Portuguese epic, *The Lusiads*. One hypothesis is that he was trying to compete with Edward Fitzgerald, whose *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* was, by the 1880s, becoming very popular, but was anxious about his own ability as a poet. However, a more likely explanation is that Burton deliberately chose to call his poem a 'translation', in order to be able to include his notes. His translation of *The Thousand Nights and A Night* (1885) also contains detailed footnotes, and it is clear from both his other translations and from his travel accounts that he enjoyed writing notes, where he could feel at liberty to express his opinions and could also demonstrate his knowledge of Middle Eastern cultures. Using the device of a fictitious translation, and concealing himself behind the initials F.B., Burton was able to present his original poem in the way he wanted.

Claiming fictitious sources can also serve as way of claiming authenticity for a text, as can the use of fictitious dialogue in travel writing. Many travel writers include conversations that they claim have taken place, sometimes phrased in standard English, sometimes in pidgin, which readers accept at face value and assume to be translations of actual dialogue. This is an accepted convention in the genre, even though the traveller may be reporting conversations with speakers in a language he or she does not know, or with speakers using obscure dialects or, in those cases where the traveller passes through several countries, or in more than one language. Such is the authenticity conferred on travel accounts, that what must in many cases have been entirely fictitious conversations are taken as a true record of an encounter.

In the nineteenth century, when archaizing was an accepted practice in translation (we need only think of William Morris' versions of Norse sagas or of Homer, written in his version of medieval English, for example) it was commonplace to find mock medieval language also used more broadly in novels where there

was a need to convey a sense of foreignness and to signal that speakers were using a language other than English. Here too there is an implicit idea of translation; characters, particularly in novels set in colonial contexts, are given dialogue that sounds strange and archaic, as is the case in Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*, where the non-Englishness of most of the exchanges are characterized by the use of 'thee' and 'thou', 'aye' and 'nay' and a whole range of stylistic devices that signal to readers that the characters belong to a different culture. All these practices, archaizing, fictitious dialogue, pseudotranslation, self-translation further blur the lines between what we term translation and original, and

> once we start to consider the way in which both the terminology of translation and the idea of an authentic "original" that exists somewhere beyond the text in front of us are used by writers, then the question of when a translation is or is not taking place becomes increasingly difficult to answer.
>
> (Bassnett and Lefevere, 1996: 39)

CONCLUSION

REAPPRAISING TRANSLATION

In 1982, Gabriel García Márquez was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. He began his Nobel address by talking about the meticulous diary kept by Antonio Pigafetta, a Florentine navigator who had circumnavigated the world with Magellan and so was one of the first Europeans to sail around the South American continent. Marquez remarks that Pigafetta's diary seems to contemporary readers to have been the product of a wild imagination, for he wrote down details of the strange creatures he claimed to have seen, such as birds without feet, gannets without tongues whose beaks looked like spoons, a monstrous animal 'with the head and ears of a mule, the body of a camel, the hooves of a deer and the neigh of a horse' (García Márquez, 1992: 207). Márquez goes on to recount other fantastical stories about his native continent, including the myth of El Dorado and the behaviour of various crazed dictators, before moving to the reality of the poverty and oppression suffered by millions. Latin America, he is saying, is a place where reality and fantasy coexist, often in ways that make the one indistinguishable from the other.

What García Márquez does not spell out, but which is apparent from his reference to Pigafetta, is that far from being fantastical, the Florentine's diary contained his attempt to describe creatures he had never seen before. We now know he was writing about penguins, spoonbills and llamas, seeking a way of recording his impressions for readers back in Europe; in other words, he was trying to translate his experience into a frame of reference that his fellow Florentines would understand. The creatures he described may have appeared so fantastical as to have seemed to be the product of a disordered imagination, but he was seeking to provide a realistic account of them for people who were unable to see the creatures for themselves. What Pigafetta was doing was translating, and through translation he was able to include his compatriots in his discoveries of an expanded world.

The task of translation is to allow readers to have access to texts that would otherwise be incomprehensible to them. The complexity of that task is all too obvious, for texts come into being in a particular place and at a particular time, both of which are unique, and so can never be identically reproduced. This is a task, as we have seen, that carries great responsibility. What the translator provides, however, is his or her reading of a text or, as we have seen in case of translating for the theatre, a reading devised in collaboration with the other participants in the staging of a work. The translator is the agent of the transformation of a text, and it is significant that today there is a growing body of work that focuses on what Paschalis Nikolaou and Maria-Venetia Kyritsi have called 'the micro-level of the translator's unconscious' (Nikolaou and Kyritsi, 2008: 4). In addition, the purpose of the translation is also a significant factor, and this opens up ideological questions, as we saw with reference to the role played by translation in colonial contexts. As Tymoczko and Gentzler point out, in the introduction to their *Translation and Power*, translation is both a metonymic and a metaphoric process:

> Translations are inevitably partial: meaning in a text is always overdetermined, and the information in a source text is therefore always more extensive than translation can convey. Conversely, the receptor language and culture entail obligatory features that shape the possible

> interpretations of the translation, as well as extending the meanings of the translation in directions other than those inherent in the source text.
>
> (Tymoczko and Gentzler, 2002: xviii)

In other words, what can be said in one language can never be reproduced in an identical form in another, not only because languages are different, but also because cultures are different. Eugene Nida has written extensively on the difficulties of translating the Bible, and in his 'Principles of Correspondence' (1964) he shows how translators have tackled seemingly untranslatable problems. For example, he points out that the phrase 'white as snow' would be meaningless in a context where snow does not exist, hence the translator has to find a suitable substitute for whiteness, such as 'white as egret feathers'. A more complex problem is posed by those biblical stories that have a particular religious significance, such as the account of Christ's entry into Jerusalem when his disciples spread leaves and branches in his path as a gesture of respect. Nida points out that in parts of West Africa, not only should any path that is to be walked or ridden over by a chief be swept clean, but anyone throwing a branch on that spotless pathway would be judged guilty of serious insulting behaviour (Nida, 2000 [1964]: 137). Such problems, which go beyond the linguistic, require solutions that may involve radical restructuring of the source text or the addition of paratextual material that will facilitate understanding.

The growing interest in translation in the late twentieth century has led to a number of novels, plays and poems that take translation as their central theme. One of the best-known works focusing on the multidimensionality of translation is *Translations* (1981), a play by the Irish writer Brian Friel, which explores the complexity of the linguistic and cultural issues that arise when translation is imposed by an external controlling power. The action takes place in a small Irish-speaking community in County Donegal in 1833, and focuses on the lives of individuals caught up in two momentous changes: the arrival of a British Army detachment charged with making the first Ordnance Survey map of Ireland and the introduction of an education system through

the medium of English to replace the 'hedge-schools' that had provided classical education to Irish-speaking Catholic children. Hugh, the hedge-schoolmaster speaks Latin and Ancient Greek fluently, his son Owen has returned from Dublin, renamed 'Roland' by the English and now is acting as interpreter between the Irish-speaking community and the English Captain Lancey and Lieutenant Yolland. Although the dialogue of the play takes place in English, with occasional classical language quotations, the audience is required to suspend disbelief and imagine that most of the characters are speaking in Irish. The clash between the languages is evident at such moments as when Owen says:

> I'm employed as a part-time, underpaid, civilian interpreter. My job is to translate the quaint, archaic tongue you people persist in speaking into the King's good English.
>
> (Friel, 1981: 29)

In Act I, all the issues that will acquire ever more sinister implications are set out. The young woman, Máire, wants to learn English because she thinks it will be of more use to her in America, where she wants to emigrate in order to make a new life for herself. Hugh can see that the hedge-school system will be doomed once an English-language school system is imposed upon the community, and fears that this will mean the end of Ireland's classical heritage. Both Owen, and his brother Manus, can see the political implications of changing Irish place names into English, just as they also disclose a strategy for subverting the designs of a colonial English establishment. As Owen translates the words of Captain Lancey, the audience, unlike all those characters who appear not to understand English, can see how he manipulates what the Englishman is saying, to provide glib reassurances and thereby obscuring the more serious implications of what is at root an imperial activity. Manus realizes what his brother is doing, and the difference of emphasis between the perspectives of the two brothers is all too evident in the following dialogue:

> MANUS: What sort of a translation was that, Owen?
> OWEN: Did I make a mess of it?

MANUS: You weren't saying what Lancey was saying!
OWEN: 'Uncertainty in meaning is incipient poetry' – who said that?
MANUS: There was nothing uncertain about what Lancey said: it's a bloody military operation, Owen! And what's Yolland's function? What's 'incorrect' about the place-names we have here?
OWEN: Nothing at all. They're just going to be standardized.
MANUS: You mean changed into English?
OWEN: Where's the ambiguity, they'll be Anglicized.
MANUS: And they call you Roland! They both call you Roland!
OWEN: Shhh. Isn't it ridiculous? They seemed to get it wrong from the very beginning – or else they can't pronounce Owen. I was afraid some of you bastards would laugh.
MANUS: Aren't you going to tell them?
OWEN: Yes-yes-soon-soon.
MANUS: But they ...
OWEN: Easy, man, easy. Owen – Roland – what the hell. It's only a name. It's the same me, isn't it?

(Friel, 1981: 32–3)

Both brothers are on the same side, in that both have a strategy for subversion, but they have very different ways of confronting the language question. Owen is less concerned than Manus about his 'Irish' and his translated name, and Friel's play shows the intimate link that continues to exist psychologically between language and identity. At the end of the play, in Act 3, when the threat of eviction looms over the community, Hugh remarks to his unhearing son Owen, that 'it is not the literal past, the "facts" of history that shape us, but images of the past embedded in language' (Friel, 1981: 66). Language is weighted with meaning, and translation is not an innocent activity insofar as it has the capacity to alter, or even, to distort meaning. What Friel does in this play is to explore the multidimensionality of translation, with the implications that it carries for individuals and for society more broadly. The abolition of the hedge-school tradition and its replacement with English-language schools will indeed equip children with that language that, as we are shown, is the language that emigrants to America are keen to learn, because it is perceived as the language of modernity. But at the same time, the loss of the hedge-schools means losing the ancient Irish link with classical languages, and so signals the end of centuries of tradition. Indeed, in the play the colonizing language is shown to be impoverished, undermining the superior education of its Irish counterpart; hence the replacement of Irish place names, with all the indigenous connotations that those names have acquired over time, by newly invented English names, is shown to be an extreme violation not only of tradition, but of Irish identity.

Translation is movement, across time and also across space. It is a kind of journey, beginning at one point and moving across borders, itself a far from innocent or politically neutral activity, and it is a textual process that involves encounters between languages. In her book, *Translating Montreal: Episodes in the Life of a Divided City*, Sherry Simon explains how she tried to expand the definition of translation to include 'writing that is inspired by the encounter with other tongues, including the effects of creative interference' (Simon 2006: 17). Her view is that translation is fundamental to all cultural development, since it involves relationships of exchange, sometimes of resistance, sometimes of interpenetration. She examines a bilingual city, where just such processes of translation are part of daily life, and argues that every act of translation highlights the ways in which languages, cultures and individuals operate with subtle differences in the world they share:

> It obliges us to ask with each proper name, with each cultural reference, with each stylistic trait, with each idiomatic expression, with each swear word: how similar is this reality to its possible replacement in another language? ... how different? When do differences climb from the trivial to the substantial?
>
> (Simon, 2006: 12)

Following her book on Montreal, Simon published *Cities in Translation: Intersections of Language and Memory* (2012) in which she considers other linguistically divided cities, including Calcutta, Trieste and Barcelona. Her concerns are similar to those of Friel, in that she explores aspects of translation that involve unequal power relations between individuals, languages and cultures. In her chapter on Trieste, Simon discusses the case of Boris

Pahor, the centenarian Triestine writer who works in Slovene. Born in 1913, Pahor became passionately involved in the struggle for survival of the Slovene language during Mussolini's Fascist regime, when a compulsory Italianization programme was imposed on the region. During the 1920s and 1930s, Slovene language and culture were banned, and in his novel *Qui è proibito parlare* (*Forbidden to Speak That Here*), written in the 1960s but not published in Italian until 2009, Pahor highlights the persecution of Slovene speakers in Trieste. What makes the case of Pahor interesting is that his work continued to be neglected in Italy until the twenty-first century, when he was in his nineties, although his novels had been known for some years in France, and he had been awarded the French Legion of Honour. His novel, *Necropolis*, based on his experiences in a concentration camp in the 1940s has been compared to Primo Levi's intensely moving accounts of a similar experience in books such as *If This is a Man*. Pahor's fame in his native Italy is therefore recent, and came about through translation and through the increased prominence of Slovene in Trieste and the surrounding region after the collapse of the Iron Curtain and the expansion of the European Union. In his play, Friel draws attention to the destructive effect that translation can have in an unequal society, while Pahor exposes the brutality of discriminatory language policies, while at the same time showing how translation can become a means of ensuring the survival of a threatened culture.

What Simon's work demonstrates is that in modern blingual or multilingual cities, translation is an indispensable part of everyday life. The space of translation is normalized and becomes a space of exchange that can bring about cultural renewal. This is the aspect of translation that is so often ignored. Focusing on what gets lost in translation means that less attention is paid to what a literature and a culture may gain by the new forms, ideas, themes and information in general that arrive via translation. In an essay on Borges and translation, Walter Carlos Costa argues that the greater or lesser autonomy of a culture is linked to the ways in which it has incorporated (and continues to incorporate) elements imported from elsewhere, or, as he puts it, 'to its politics of translation' (Costa, 2002: 182). He gives examples of the

power of those translations that have shaped the work of some of the world's greatest writers, from ancient Rome to contemporary Japan, claiming that translation functions as a site of apprenticeship and testing of both forms and topics for many writers in many contexts. This is similar to Lefevere's argument in *Translation. Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, where he suggests that of many forms of rewriting, which include historiography, anthologization, criticism, editing and adaptation, the most recognizable is translation. It is also potentially the most influential, 'because it is able to project the image of an author and/or a (series of) work(s) in another culture, lifting that author and/or those works beyond the boundaries of their culture of origin' (Lefevere, 1992a: 9). Earlier, in 1984, Antoine Berman, in his book on Romantic translation, had also argued for translation to be considered as a serious object of study, and called for a comprehensive history of translation as a first stage in establishing the importance of translation in literary history more generally (Berman, 1984). More recently, Lawrence Venuti has called for translators themselves to join together to establish what he calls a translation culture, adding that

> It is only with the emergence of a translation culture that readers will learn how to appreciate translations without reducing them to their source texts, that the practice of translation will be understood and valued in academic institutions as both a creative form of writing and rigorous form of scholarship.
>
> (Venuti, 2013: 248)

Venuti's view is that if such a rethinking of the role of translation were to come to pass, then publishers would see a financial return that would justify their investment in and support for translation. This may be a utopian ideal with regard to publishers in the English-language speaking world, but there are already signs that his call for a re-evaluation of translation in academic institutions is starting to be heard. As literary studies moves away from an earlier focus on national trends and becomes more transnational, so the role played by translated texts in the formation of literary canons becomes harder to ignore.

Throughout the centuries, discourse about translation has circled around the relationship between a translation and an original. Writers have variously attempted to define that relationship, some stressing loss, some emphasizing gain, all concerned to describe a process that involves the transformation of one text into another. In a little poem entitled 'Lost in Translation', Michael Swan tries to summarize the inevitability of change that occurs as a translator rewrites a poem:

> Inevitably it has lost something in the process:
> The original is written
> In hendecasyllables
> With a complex internal rhyme scheme
> And is about something completely different.
>
> (Swan, 2003: 50)

The Uruguayan writer, Cristina Peri Rossi playfully describes translation as the pursuit of an unattainable object, like ideal love. The translator, like a lover, tries, but can never succeed in fully possessing another writer's text, because as any text moves across a language boundary, so it changes and becomes something else. Writing about her experiences both as a translator and as a translated writer, she declares herself fascinated by the complex relationship between translation and original, describing it as 'to a certain degree, vampiric, phagocytic, like love, and shameless, like pornography' (Peri Rossi, 2002: 58). Comparing the shamelessness of pornography to translation might seem an exaggeration, but the point Peri Rossi is making here is that perfect translation is unattainable, it is a fantasy, born out of a desire to possess the original completely.

What this book has sought to show is that no translation can ever be the same as its original. Not only are languages different, but so also are aesthetic conventions and reader expectations, which continually change; indeed, as Borges advises, there can never be a definitive translation of anything, only a constant and dynamic flow of changing versions. Any evaluation of a translation needs therefore to be made in context, with the translation benchmarked against the norms of a particular literary system at a given moment in time. This means also that translation is a continuous process, with each generation establishing different criteria for the quality of the translations it requires. It is also important to remember that a translation is the physical trace of just one individual's reading of a text, which, as we have seen, can be clearly discerned if we compare translations by different people of the same text.

Moreover, as we have also seen, trying to establish a hierarchy between original and translation is problematic because the very notion of what constitutes an original is often unclear. In some cases, an original may be the composite result of generations of editing, as happens with older texts, while in other cases, as with playtexts, the original itself may in some way be incomplete until realized in performance. Nor can we safely say that there always is a clearly delineated 'original', because, as we suggested in Chapter 6, technological innovation in the twenty-first century is causing us to rethink more traditional forms of textual practice. Rather than perpetuating the dichotomy between 'inferior' translation on the one hand and 'superior' original on the other, which relegates translation either to a form of secondary literary practice at best, or alleges a betrayal of the original text at worst, the translation process should be viewed as nothing less than the creation of a new original for a different readership. Translators cannot avoid reshaping texts for new readers, so it is more accurate to see that reshaping process as something vital and creative in its own right.

One example of that creativity will serve as the final example in this book of the power and influence of translation. In 1887, the great Italian composer, Giuseppe Verdi, was persuaded to come out of retirement to work on a new opera. That opera was *Otello*, a rewriting of Shakespeare's play, *Othello*, by the Italian playwright and librettist, Arrigo Boito. Verdi was fascinated by Boito's version, and when the opera was first performed in 1887 it was a great success. Shakespeare's *Othello*, written in the early seventeenth century, was based on a story by another Italian, Giovanni Battista Giraldi, known as Cinthio, which was included in his collection of stories, *Gli Ecatommiti* published in 1565. If Shakespeare knew Italian, he may have read Cinthio's story, or he may have come across the 1584 French translation, for no English

version existed until the eighteenth century. So Verdi's *Otello* is a nineteenth-century translation into Italian opera of a seventeenth-century English play based on a sixteenth-century Italian story, and when I saw that opera performed recently, the Italian text was translated into twenty-first century English surtitles, shown on screens at either side of the stage. An example such as this reveals multiple layers of translation activity, and highlights the processes of rewriting, reshaping, and reconfiguring that not only ensure the survival of a text through the centuries, but which can also be innovative and invigorating. Far from being a marginal activity, translation is, and always has been, fundamental to literary and cultural renewal and change.

GLOSSARY

Acculturation (also referred to as 'domestication') Translation that erases signs of the foreign origins of a text.

Cultural turn The shift in the early 1990s to seeing translation as embedded in a dual cultural context.

Foreignization Translation that retains signs of the foreign origin of a text.

Functionalist theory (also known as *skopos* theory) Theory that sees the strategy used by a translator as determined by the purpose or function of the translation.

Interlingual translation Term coined by Roman Jakobson to describe translation between different languages.

Intralingual translation (also known as rewording) Term coined by Roman Jakobson to describe translation within the same language.

Intersemiotic translation Term coined by Roman Jakobson to describe translation of verbal signs into other sign systems.

Manipulation Term popularized in translation studies from the 1980s referring to the changes a translator makes to a text during the translation process.

Pseudotranslation Term coined by Gideon Toury to describe texts which seem to be translations but where there is no original.

Rewriting Term coined by Andre Lefevere as an alternative to the term 'translation', thus emphasizing the creative aspect of translating.

Self-translation Term used when an author translates his/her own work.

Source language (SL) The language from which a text is translated.

Target language (TL) The language into which a text is translated.

Teletranslation, also **teleintepretation** Term referring to the translation of more complex semiotic systems in an audiovisual age.

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